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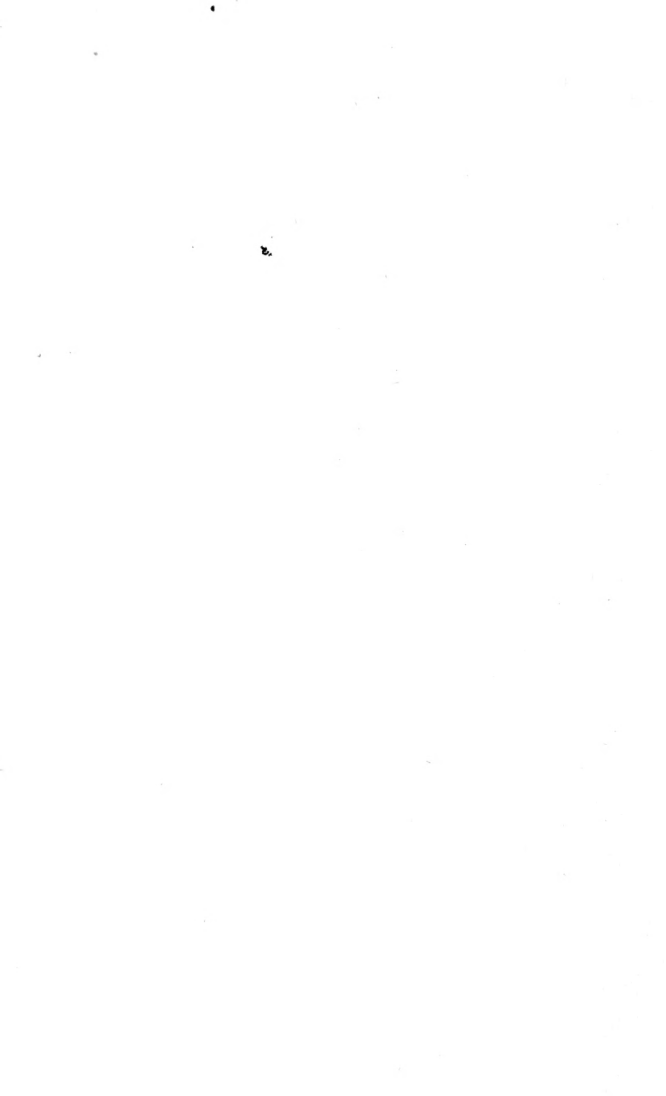


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**A COMPANION TO PALGRAVE'S
GOLDEN TREASURY**

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A COMPANION TO PALGRAVE'S GOLDEN TREASURY

BY

DAVID SOMERVELL



LONDON

GRANT RICHARDS LTD.

ST MARTIN'S STREET

MDCCCXVIII

First Printed . . . 1917
Reprinted . . . 1918

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P161

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I wish to express my gratitude to the Rev. E. C. E. Owen, who was good enough to read this work in manuscript, and made many valuable suggestions which I have adopted ; also to Mr V. Gollancz, of Repton School, and to my parents, who read the work in proof.

In the second edition, a few additions and corrections have been made, for some of which I am indebted to the kindness of Professor A. C. Bradley.



INTRODUCTION

There are, I believe, a great many people who love what little poetry they know, and regret that it is so little ; they wish very much that they knew more, but when they essay to explore fresh fields, they become discouraged ; the new and unfamiliar seems to lack the charm of the old and familiar ; the fields are so vast, and they lack guide-posts to point them their way. Such guide-posts as there are, our fine literature of criticism and biography, seem mostly designed for those who already know much of the country. It is in the belief that there is such a "public" as this that I have written this Companion to Palgrave's Golden Treasury, and to such and such alone it is addressed. My publisher hopes, for guessable reasons, that the book will be taken up as a school book. He has my entire sympathy ; certainly, if it is so taken up and helps to make the weekly "rep." a humaner study than it sometimes is at present, I shall be very much gratified. But I shall be still more gratified if it finds readers, in schools or elsewhere, who take it and use it for themselves, and help themselves thereby to read and enjoy poetry on their own account. That is why the book has been got up to look as unlike a "school book" as possible. For the mere association of "lessons" and "lyric poetry" has something of alliterative blasphemy about it, however valuable the lessons may be as a beginning. The schoolboy has been taught poetry in the schoolroom in vain, if he does not straightway go on to teach himself, and reach the stage at which he can echo the Psalmist and exclaim with healthy even if misplaced exultation : "I have more understanding than all

my teachers, for thy testimonies"—the testimonies of the great poet, whichever it may be—"are my meditation."

For lyric poetry is nothing if not personal. The great poet addresses himself to the little poet within each one of us, and that bard is often of shy and unsociable habit. So I have felt no shame of writing in a simple and familiar manner, seeing that the subject is naturally of an intimate character. The first rough draft of this book was written at the request of and for the use of a single boy of eighteen, and I have felt that I could probably best serve other readers by keeping in mind my own original reader and writing as for him throughout.

I have not hesitated to criticise freely, not sparing at times the works of acknowledged masters. Such, it seems to me, is the duty of every critic, and even of the humblest reader. It is only by being honest with ourselves, and vigorously searching out what it is that fails to satisfy us in the poems that fall short of true greatness, that we can appreciate with perfect confidence the greatness of those that attain the authentic summits of inspiration. Even Homer may nod at times. That is well worth remembering, provided we also remember that we, the readers, nod much more often, and sometimes positively snore. In plain words, we must judge each poem fearlessly by our own canons of taste; and then remember in all modesty that our own canons of taste are as faulty as the rest of us and that our judgment is never final. When I speak slightly of poems, I hope my readers will often disagree with me, and discover the reasons of their disagreement.

I have taken Palgrave's Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics as my text because it is the standard collection of the shorter poems of our literature. It is not perfect; indeed I have called attention to many little imperfections, as they seem to me, in the course of my book. But there never will be a perfect anthology (unless it be that which I forecast in Appendix I.). Its most likely rival, The Oxford Book of English Verse, is twice as long and

many times as expensive. The only objection that could be brought against *The Golden Treasury* is that it is not up to date. But in matters of art that is apt to be a rather trivial criticism. The war, which has stirred us to finer endeavours in so many directions, has produced a splendid outpouring of new poetry. Better still, it has reawakened a sense of the value of poetry in thousands of readers. We turn first, as is natural and right, to the new poets, but we should be false to the great tradition that has produced and inspired them if we did not also turn back with quickened understanding to the classics, the immortals, into whose shining company the best of our contemporary poets may some day be gathered. My work consists of descriptive introductions to all those poems (roughly speaking, about half the poems of *The Golden Treasury*) that seem to me to stand in any need of such. In these I try to indicate in a general way the spirit and quality of the poem, to prepare the reader for what he may expect, to focus his attention on what seems remarkable. I have not occupied much space with explanations of difficulties—the besetting sin of note-writers, as I think. For difficulties are more often than not weaknesses, and to “explain” the difficulty is but to focus attention on the weaker part of the poem. In the introductory remarks on each of the five “Books” I have attempted no more than a very brief sketch of the general character of the period under review. For such general criticism is not the real object of this work. Rather, the reader is invited to build up his own general impressions from the study of the particular single poems. In *Book First* many of the poems are so simple and so similar in style and spirit that individual treatment seemed, as regards many perfectly charming poems, neither possible nor necessary. The reader must not assume that because I pass over some song of Shakespeare or of Herrick I am therefore indifferent to it. As regards *Books Fourth and Fifth*, it would, however, be much nearer the truth to

say that I write about the poems I like, and omit those I do not care about.

I may be told that Palgrave himself supplied notes to his Golden Treasury, and that mine are therefore a work of supererogation. I can only say that, excellent as some of Palgrave's notes are—and I gratefully acknowledge my debt to them—they do not seem to me to supply what the kind of reader I have in mind would want, especially in the later Books. To take but one example: there is no note at all on Wordsworth's Ode on Intimations of Immortality. Also, I don't think any reader enjoys turning to small-print notes at the end of a book—which may seem a frivolous objection, but it is not. But I am grateful to Palgrave for his industrious explanations of the classical allusions of Milton, Gray, and others—grateful because he thereby saves me the trouble of undertaking the tiresome duty. As for the reader, he must judge for himself whether, since presumably he is not going in for an English Literature examination, he really wants to have these things explained.

NOTE ON EDITIONS OF THE GOLDEN TREASURY

The Golden Treasury can be had in several different editions at a shilling. But their contents differ, and this requires a word of explanation. The Golden Treasury was first published in 1861, by Macmillan & Co., as a selection from the works of poets no longer alive at that date. Thus all the so-called "Victorians" are excluded. The book is divided into four parts, chronologically, described as Elizabethan, seventeenth century, eighteenth century, and "our own age"—or, as we should say, "the romantic movement." Within each part the poems are not grouped by authors, but distributed in a "poetically effective" order, often very interesting for purposes of comparison and contrast. Many of the

poems are given titles for which Palgrave and not the poet is responsible. In 1891, thirty years later, Palgrave produced his final edition. About fifty fresh poems had by this time been added, half of them being in Book First, but the original date limit had been preserved. A few poems, some good and some bad, had been dropped. Within recent years the first edition has gone out of copyright, and has been published in the Everyman Library. It has also been published in the World's Classics with an additional Fifth Book, representing the poets of the Victorian Age. Thus the book exists at present in three distinct forms: Palgrave's first edition (Everyman), Palgrave's first edition with Victorian Supplement (World's Classics), and Palgrave's last edition (Macmillan). I have adapted my book for the use of readers of all three editions indifferently. My Arabic numerals indicate the place of the poem in the Everyman and World's Classics: my Roman numerals its place in Macmillan's edition.

BOOK FIRST

THE main energy of Elizabethan poetry went into Drama, and that can be represented here only by a selection of the songs with which the Elizabethan dramatists enriched and diversified their plays, especially their comedies. We have here fourteen such songs from Shakespeare, and others by other dramatists, Nash, Marlowe, Lodge, Greene and Lyly preceding, and Webster and Heywood following, Shakespeare in point of date.

These are all songs for singing, and as we read them they seem to cry out from the printed page for the dainty Elizabethan airs to which they once were wedded. And we should never forget that the Elizabethan musicians were a company only less eminent than the Elizabethan dramatists. Read in cold print, and taken in large numbers at a time, they lose something of their sparkle, something of their vivacity. The same is true, of course, of the songs not taken from plays, in particular the beautiful specimens from Campion, musician and poet, in whose *Book of Ayres* music and words of his own composition are wedded together.

But merely as literature, and divorced from their musical accompaniment, these little poems have a host of delightful qualities. I will only mention two. First, their untiring gaiety. This is obvious enough in poems where the subject is itself a cheerful one, so obvious that it would not be worth comment. The poet may well be gay when he delights in the return of spring (l. i.), in the humours of fairy-

land (ii. and iii.), in a happy love affair (5. vii.; viii.; 7. x.; 8. xi.). What I would rather dwell on is a kind of plaintive gaiety, a smiling through the tears that irradiates the pathos of poems whose subject is pathetic. We are in the childhood of English lyric poetry, and there is a tender prettiness about the sorrow depicted here, which transmutes at least half the sorrow into a beauty in which the sorrow is no longer felt. We feel of them what Laertes felt of his sister Ophelia in her madness :

“Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself
She turns to favour and to prettiness.”

Gaiety is perhaps in some cases far too strong a word; but what I want to suggest is that the mood is almost gay when set beside the stern despair, the utter melancholy that we find in some lyrics of a later age. I will point out examples of what I mean when I come to deal with individual poems.

The second quality of these songs is their metrical deftness and versatility. Nearly every song has a stanza of its own invention, so to speak, yet handled with such mastery that the particular form chosen seems inevitable and its very originality is obscured. The earliest poet represented is Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542), with whom our modern lyric poetry may fairly be said to begin. For his great merit, according to Andrew Lang, is that he abstained from doggerel allegory, the besetting vice of mediæval poetry in its long decay, and wrote briefly and sincerely of himself, his own loves, joys, and sorrows. The essence of lyric poetry is that it should be the direct expression of a mood, vividly experienced by

the poet and through the power of his art evoked in the reader.

Apart from the one long poem, Spenser's *Prothalamion*, the poems that are not actually or virtually Songs, are Sonnets. Love, its joys and sorrows, anxieties and ecstasies, is the subject here even more prevailingly than in the Songs. But the whole tone is different. The Sonneteer is ever earnest, pensive, and grave, and when Palgrave leads us from a group of songs to a group of sonnets and back again, we pass from *scherzo* to *andante*, and back again to *scherzo*. Twenty-one of the thirty-three sonnets are from Shakespeare's cycle describing the course of his love for the mysterious "Mr W. H.," the problem of whose identity will always baffle the learned. As Palgrave pays no regard to the order of the sonnets in Shakespeare's work, but treats each as a poem in itself, we need not trouble ourselves here with difficulties as to the course of the story therein unfolded. Three sonnets are from Sir Philip Sidney's cycle *Astrophel to Stella*, relating the course of his unlucky courtship. A Scots poet, Drummond of Hawthornden, supplies the only religious poems (58, 59, 61. lxxx., lxxvi., lxxxiv.) in Book First. This is as it should be. The spirit of Knox had long been abroad in Scotland, but Puritanism, the religious offspring of our own otherwise strangely secular Tudor Reformation, had not yet grown to its full stature and found its poetic voice.

2. IV.

DRUMMOND: SUMMONS TO LOVE. A charming little love lyric, how charming we hardly realise till the unexpected turn of the last line. So "She" is not there, and is perhaps hardly expected!—"alas!" We must re-read the whole poem, for the lover's delight in nature will assume a different aspect, in view of this melancholy fact. And yet—

look at it the other way round. If the lover enjoys the prospect of a fine day so exuberantly, the lady's absence can't be such a heavy blow after all. As so often in the poems of this First Book, the melancholy is more than half make-believe. The classical allusions are explained in Palgrave's notes.

3. V.

SHAKESPEARE: TIME AND LOVE. The construction of this sonnet is typical of Shakespeare. In the first five couplets, the same idea is stated and restated five times by means of different metaphors. Then, and then only, comes the idea of the sonnet, which could, from the point of view of mere prose, have been drawn as a conclusion from the first couplet alone.

4. VI.

The plan is the same, though the pattern is slightly different. In the first twelve lines one question is asked in varying terms four times over, at length in the first four lines, at length again in the second four, and then more shortly and so with more urgency in lines 9 and 10, and again in 11 and 12. The last two lines alone supply the answer. I shall not subject the rest of the sonnets to this kind of analysis. The reader will find for himself that, in one form or another, it is Shakespeare's usual but not invariable method.

12. XVI.

SHAKESPEARE: A CONSOLATION. The friend to whom the sonnets are addressed was apparently a young nobleman, possibly William Herbert Earl of Pembroke. That fact explains the sentiment of this sonnet.

16. XIX.

LODGE: ROSALYNDE. One at least of the points in this ecstatic description of beauty may have been suggested by the Song of Solomon (iv. 1-7):

“ Behold, thou art fair, my love ; behold, thou art fair ;
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil ;
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That lie along the side of Mount Gilead.

Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly
shorn,
Which are come up from the washing ;
Whereof every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth is comely :
Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate
Behind thy veil.

Thy neck is like the tower David builded for an
armoury,
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,
All the shields of the mighty men.

Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins
of a roe,
Which feed among the lilies.

Until the day be cool and the shadows flee away,
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.
Thou art all fair, my love ;
And there is no spot in thee.”

Set beside this, Lodge's song seems a very sober and cold affair. It is worth perhaps comparing this poem with a later and greater poet's praise of beautiful girlhood, Wordsworth's *Highland Girl* (249. ccxcvii.). They are, of course, miles asunder, for many reasons, but most of all because the Elizabethan

describes physical beauty and the impression it makes, and nothing else, while for Wordsworth physical beauty is the symbol of something more, and to him, at any rate, something more important.

XXI.

ANON: A PICTURE. For the notion that the sweet-heart is more than a match for the God of Love himself, compare *Cupid and Campaspe* (51. lxxii.).

21. XXIX.

ALEXANDER EARL OF STERLINE: TO AURORA. Notice the neatness with which, in the last two lines, the poet expresses the idea that the sympathy of two lovers over their sorrows banishes the sorrows of each.

XXX.

ANON: IN LACRIMAS. I am tempted to say this is the gem of the whole first book, so perfectly balanced is the combination of dexterous lightness of touch and depth of real feeling.

24. XXXII.

SIDNEY: A DITTY. This cheery little song affords a modest comment on Shakespeare's sonnets by reminding us that the romantic love of two young men for one another, enshrined in the Bible in the story of David and Jonathan, and in Homer in the story of Achilles and Patroclus, was commoner in Elizabethan days than now. Or perhaps it was not itself commoner, but only its expression in poetry. Few in any age can have elicited this romantic love more fully than Sidney himself, who was "the glass of fashion and the mould of form" of the Elizabethan age. One friend of his expressed a wish that when he died the words "Friend of Philip Sidney" should be inscribed on his tomb.¹

¹ The above note was written in ignorance. I now find that this is after all an ordinary love song, the singer being the lady. I ought perhaps simply to delete the note, but I leave it stand-

27. XXXVII.

SHAKESPEARE: WINTER. A little way back I compared an Elizabethan with a modern poem rather to the disadvantage of the former, so I will here make amends. After reading this poem, turn to 256. ccciv. Shakespeare's very homely lines give us a concrete impression that is worth carrying away; Campbell's unsubstantial allegorising does not.

28. XXXVIII.

SHAKESPEARE: SONNET. A very perfect sonnet; notice only the "solidity" of the picture evoked in the first four lines. This is one of the saddest sonnets, when the poet is dwelling on the inequality of age that will inevitably soon terminate the friendship he commemorates.

XL.

SIDNEY: SLEEP. The first four lines of this sonnet seem to me immortal, in the sense that no change of fashion can interfere with the vivid appeal their beauty makes. The last six lines, on the other hand, are definitely Elizabethan, in the more restricted sense. Their quaintness is of their age, and though we like it, we feel in it something alien to ourselves, and should consider a modern poet who imitated such lines to be not merely playing the Elizabethan, but playing the fool as well.

34. XLV.

BARNFIELD: THE NIGHTINGALE. The nightingale has always been a favourite of the poets, and a list of the "nightingale" poems in the book may be of interest here (xlvii. 244. ccxc. 369).

ing for a variety of reasons, one of them being that a good critic remarked to me that the song "ought to have been" what I thought it was: my note, the critic added, was therefore "ideally true." On that matter the reader must form his own opinion.

39. LI.

SHAKESPEARE: BLIND LOVE. Shakespeare uses the same idea in a very different context in the famous "Dagger speech" in *Macbeth*:

"Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest."

LII. 40. LIII.

CAMPION: SLEEP, ANGRY BEAUTY. ANON: THE UNFAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS. Both these poems illustrate a characteristic of Elizabethan poetry I pointed out in the introductory remarks on Book First. Both are melancholy enough in subject, but the treatment forbids us to take the melancholy quite seriously. In the first, this effect is due to the comic touches of the first four lines; in the second, to the prattling refrains. I do not mean that the poems are a failure because they fail to be melancholy: they hardly try to be, and they succeed very well in being something else, for which I should be sorry to have to find a name.

42. LVI.

SHAKESPEARE: BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND. The first lines of this song seem to anticipate exactly the idea of King Lear's terrific outburst amid the storm (*King Lear*, III. ii. 1-19).

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the
cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking
thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!

Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ungrateful man!

* * * * *

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness:
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then, let fall
Your horrible pleasure."

But, after all, one idea treated in two wholly different spirits is not one idea, but two ideas. The passage quoted above is a flesh and blood reality, a spiritual storm of passion outstorming the fury of the elements; and we have just seen the ingratitude of Lear's daughters with our own eyes. The song, on the other hand, is a conventional expression, and "man's ingratitude" is so generalised that we can dwell on it without a pang. It is also worth remembering the song's proper context. It occurs in *As You Like It*, and is sung to the banished Duke by one of his faithful courtiers; and if any character could be described as the opposite of King Lear it would be this banished Duke, who though unjustly expelled from his dominions by his wicked brother could yet exclaim, "Sweet are the uses of adversity," and find

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in everything."

The refrain of the song,

"Then, heigh, ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly,"

which taken out of its context appears nothing more than genial nonsense, had a special significance

no doubt for the Wordsworthian Duke who found "tongues in trees."

LVII.

ANON: A SWEET LULLABY. This lyric tells or implies more of a "story" than any other in Book First, a story which I dare not attempt to tell, lest I mar it by prosaic handling. lx. takes the same theme.

LVIII.

SIDNEY: SONNET. I wonder if Shelley had this sonnet in mind when he wrote his little poem *To the Moon* (264. cccii.).

44. LXII.

SHAKESPEARE: DIRGE OF LOVE. This might be read alongside of 381, though the parallel is certainly not a very close one.

45. LXIV.

SHAKESPEARE: FIDELE. I find it hard to resist the impression that Shirley, one of the very last of the Elizabethan dramatists, had the music of this poem running in his head when he composed *Death the Leveller* (69. xcii.).

46. LXV.

SHAKESPEARE: A SEA DIRGE. Shakespeare had previously used the idea of the third and fourth lines in a grimmer form in Clarence's dream in *Richard III.* (I. iv. 28). The song is from *The Tempest*, and of Shakespeare's art in that play a critic has adroitly quoted the words of the song, saying it had

"suffered a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

53. LXXIV.

SPENSER: PROTHALAMION. Spenser was the one Elizabethan poet of quite the first rank whose genius did not turn to drama, but he is even less accessible to a collection of "Songs and Lyrics" than the dramatists themselves, who can at least supply

their songs. Of his great work, *The Faerie Queene*, only a quarter was written of what was originally planned, but even the fragment is one of the longest poems in the language. No poet, not even Keats, was a greater master of honeyed and gorgeous language. He was the great conservative among the poets of his age, alike in his love of slightly archaic diction, and in his bent towards allegory. The poem celebrates the espousals of the Ladies Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset, who figure therein as "two swans of goodly hue." Those whom this poem charms—and I do not think that its elaborate and diffuse beauty appeal to all modern readers—should turn to some other collection for the *Epithalamion*, to my mind a finer poem, striking a note of more vivid sincerity of feeling.

55. LXXVII.

DRUMMOND: THIS LIFE, WHICH SEEMS SO FAIR. A perfect expression of the unprofitable mood, "*Vanitas vanitatum*." Notice how skilfully the "bubble" is kept in the air through the twelve lines of the poem and only "turns to nought" in the last three words. The simile is as old as Lucian (the "Charon dialogue"), and probably much older.

57.

BACON: LIFE. I believe it is doubtful whether Lord Bacon wrote this poem: and that may be the reason why Palgrave omitted it in his last edition, having included it in the first on grounds of reputed authorship alone. But it seems worth preserving as a companion piece to 55. lxxvii. It expresses the same idea, but in terms of science rather than art. Drummond gives us the picture of children playing at soap bubbles and leaves it at that. Bacon, if Bacon it be, surveys the various departments of life—court, country, town; marriage, single blessedness; home, travel; war, peace—and sums up the

unprofitableness of each in a neat little epigram. Certainly the terse, crisp style is not unlike that of the essays, though the ideas are less profound.

56. LXXVIII.

SHAKESPEARE: SOUL AND BODY. This sonnet, though not quite the last in Shakespeare's series (and critics are agreed that the last thirty sonnets are unarranged, in the form we have them), is truly their epilogue, and may be taken to represent for Shakespeare the "conclusion of the whole matter." After long dwelling on the material beauties of the body, Soul and Body are here finally put in their right relation to one another. (I wish to claim no authority for this view. It is rash for the unlearned to make *any* definite statement about the sonnets. I put it forward as a fancy rather than a dogma.)

LXXIX.

CAMPION: THE MAN OF UPRIGHT LIFE. Might we not call this an "Ode in the Horatian Manner"? Readers of Horace will easily find parallels to its sentiment.

58., 59. LXXX., LXXXI.

DRUMMOND: LESSONS OF NATURE. At the end of the Elizabethan book, and on the verge of the Second Book, dominated by Milton, we come on religious poetry for the first time. The poet is a Scot—suitably enough, for it was from Scotland in the political sphere also that the first impulse to the Puritan Revolution came. The subject of the first is the blindness of man who fails to decipher God's name in the book of Nature; of the second, it is the old riddle of the Psalmist, "Why do the wicked prosper?"

60. LXXXII.

SHAKESPEARE: THE WORLD'S WAY. Here Shakespeare approaches that same "problem of evil" which Drummond had stated in the preceding sonnet in

terms of religion. But Shakespeare's attitude is that of a man of this world, and a lover.

LXXXIII.

ESSEX: A WISH. I venture to class this poem as a sonnet though it has not the orthodox fourteen lines. In spirit, it is clearly a sonnet, a sonnet left unfinished in sheer world-weariness. The author was Elizabeth's foolish and unfortunate favourite.

61. LXXXIV.

DRUMMOND: SAINT JOHN BAPTIST. There is no end to Palgrave's ingenuity in the matter of the "poetically effective order" in which he places the poems, and I suspect that he placed the sonnet on the stern prophet of repentance here, as heralding the Puritan movement which pervades all the politics and some of the poetry of the fifty years that lie between the death of Shakespeare and the publication of *Paradise Lost*.

BOOK SECOND

THE great poet of this period (1620-1700) is Milton, who stands above his contemporaries as plainly as Shakespeare stood above the other poets of Book First. But there is a difference in the nature of the supremacy, for while Shakespeare is the leader of a great band of poet dramatists, Milton is a lonely genius. One critic has called him the last of the Elizabethans, another (thinking mainly of his epic works not here represented) the founder of that poetic diction too exclusively cultivated in the eighteenth century and too hastily repudiated by Wordsworth. Neither definition is adequate, but both emphasise the fact that he stood apart from his own age. He is in fact the one great poet of the Puritan movement, in itself an unpoetic thing. Anyhow, we have here his four great "long lyrics"—The *Nativity Ode*, *Lycidas*, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*; also some sonnets, of quite a different type to Shakespeare's.

The leading poet of the Restoration Age was Dryden. Most of his works are dramas now forgotten, and his best-known piece is the political satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*. Here he is represented by two fine odes in praise of Music, the subject also of Milton's *Blest Pair of Sirens*. It is worth noticing that this was the greatest age of English music. It begins with the Elizabethan madrigal writers, Gibbons and Wilbye and the rest, a company only less notable than the Elizabethan dramatists and the Elizabethan voyagers, and culminates in Purcell (1653-1695), the

one English musician who stands in the authentic line of the world's great masters. So Milton and Dryden had good reason for their choice of subject. Among later English poets Browning alone, so far as I am aware, has paid a homage of equal splendour to music, but it is not probable that his English contemporaries in music, Sir Henry Bishop and the like, inspired him to the task. Anyhow it is to musicians of Italy or Germany that he dedicates his homage.

Some poets are for all time, others for their own day, and in that latter class I shall not much mind if the reader places Marvell and Cowley. Both were poets of ambitious aims, and the great repute they once enjoyed still lends to their names a certain dignity, but when we read their poems we—which is, being honestly interpreted, I—find them rather insipid.

But most of the poems of Book Second are brief and simple lyrics. Among these one small group stands apart, the work of the religious lyric poets—Vaughan, George Herbert, and one or two others. These men were not Puritans, but Anglicans or Catholics. They are not largely represented here, and the most splendidly fervid religious lyric of the period, Crashaw's lines *Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Theresa* is not in *The Golden Treasury*. I append it to my note on 79. ciii. It has been well maintained that these more modest poets attain a spirituality pure and unalloyed, quite beyond the ken of Milton. In the *Nativity Ode*, as in *Paradise Lost*, an air of pagan mythology alloys even while it adorns the Christian mystery the poem celebrates, and the denunciation of false priests in *Lycidas* owes more to Isaiah than to the gospels.

But most of the lyrics of Book Second treat of love, in one or other of its thousand aspects. Of these it is worth making two groups, though the division

between them cannot be very sharply drawn. First, those we might call "late Elizabethan," for though written twenty years or more after Elizabeth's death, they belong to the same order as the lyrics of Book First. Some are by dramatists: Ben Jonson, Fletcher, and Shirley; *Campion's* name reappears twice. The second and larger group is that of the Cavalier poets, who prefer as a rule the simple four-line "common metre" stanza: Lovelace, who fought for King Charles, Waller, Sedley, and, chief of them if only by reason of the immense quantity of his work, Herrick, the Devonshire country parson whose profession would never be guessed from most of his better-known verses.

62. LXXXV.

MILTON: ODE ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY. The earliest and the sweetest of Milton's poems, written at the age of twenty-one. Though the subject is religious, the treatment is wholly free from Puritan severity. The influence of Spenser is strong and the long line of six feet with which each stanza closes is the same as that with which Spenser closes the nine-line stanza that bears his name. But there is none of Spenser's diffuseness, none of that impression Spenser often conveys that he can hardly get on with the matter in hand so overloaded is he with his burden of beautiful fancies. Milton is a true architect among poets, and his ornamentation, however bewilderingly magnificent, does not obscure or pervert the grand and simple outlines of his design. Notice in the early verses of "The Hymn" the cunning with which Milton works up to his central climax, "Ring out, ye crystal spheres," and the three following verses (lines 125-148). We begin with the peace of the winter night; then the civil peace actually prevailing in the Roman world for the first time for many generations; the peaceful

night again; the simple shepherds; the mysterious music; the heavens opening; and then, at the end of the long crescendo, "Ring out!" an ecstatic prayer that the Kingdom of God might be founded at once in all its completeness. "But wisest fate says no," and we turn to the forecast of the gradual conquest of the heathen religions. It is not to be denied that this latter part, with its rather learned catalogue of deities, is less thrilling than the earlier verses. The treatment of Music in this poem may be compared with that in Milton's *Blest Pair of Sirens* (115. cxlvii.).

63. LXXXVI.

DRYDEN: SONG FOR SAINT CECILIA'S DAY, 1687. Milton in the previous poem exalted Music as the divine "harmony" capable of bringing Truth and Justice back to earth, and merging earth in heaven. Dryden exalts it as the power of Creation, calling Earth into existence out of Chaos. Both alike treat of Music as the beginning and the ending of this World, the music of the morning stars singing together and the music of the last trump. The middle part of Dryden's Ode, in which he descends to analyse the elements of his orchestra, seems to me quite unworthy of the rest.

64. LXXXVII.

MILTON: ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT. Nothing could be less like the sonnets of Book First with their elaborate decoration of personal emotion than this. It was such a sonnet as this that Wordsworth had in mind when he wrote his own sonnet to Milton (213. cclvii.). In another sonnet Wordsworth reviews the uses of the Sonnet in the hands of various poets:

". . . with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart . . .

. . . and, when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet, when he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!"

The treatment is as different as the subject. Shakespeare as a rule elaborates over and over again a single thought; his method is diffuse. Milton concentrates, and every phrase is packed with fresh thought lest the narrow space of fourteen lines should not suffice for all his message. The slaughtered saints in question were the Vaudois or Waldensians, persecuted by the Duke of Savoy. Cromwell subsequently induced the French government to interfere on their behalf. These Vaudois were a Protestant body dating like our own Lollards from a period much earlier than the so-called Reformation, a fact very neatly alluded to in lines 3 and 4. "Worshipt stocks and stones" seems rather strong as a description of the religion of Rome, but such was the Puritan attitude, as Cromwell's treatment of Ireland shows. Notice finally two points of metrical arrangement. The rhythm of the sentences is kept very independent of the metrical divisions of the lines. This produces a "weighty" effect, such as Milton intended. Lastly, the system of rhymes in the last six lines is different from the Elizabethan system—a "sextet" instead of a "quatrain" and a "couplet." Milton's system is that of the original Italian sonnet writers and has been followed by most later English poets.

65. LXXXVIII.

MARVELL: HORATIAN ODE ON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND. This seems to me a very poor poem, except for the two celebrated stanzas on Charles I. (lines 57-64). Marvell was an admirer of Cromwell at this date, but the view he gives of his character

and career is vulgar and shallow ; and the expression is often both abrupt and involved. Lines 17-24 illustrate these faults only rather more markedly than most of the rest of the poem.

66. LXXXIX.

MILTON: LYCIDAS. One of the few great elegies in our language—poems, that is to say, celebrating a friend's or lover's death. Others are Shelley's *Adonais* in honour of Keats, and Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* in honour of Clough.¹ But whereas Keats and Clough were both poets, equals of the poets who mourned them, this Edward King of Cambridge University is of no importance to us, and apparently no great importance to Milton. His life and death are the pretext far rather than the inspiration of the poem. The style is the traditional "Pastoral style" that had come down to Milton from Theocritus and Virgil, but the finest passages of the poem are the two splendid digressions, the first on Fame, true and false (lines 64-84), and the second on Priesthood, true and false (lines 108-131), in which Milton hears "a strain of higher mood." These are quite out of the Pastoral tradition, and each is followed by a kind of apology. The poem dates from only a few years before the Puritan Revolution, and a certain Puritan strain is evident in the poem, both in the scorn expressed for the popular Cavalier love poets (lines 67-69) and in the tremendous denunciation of worldly priests (lines 114-131). Notice in this last passage the happy transition by which the "shepherd" of Pastoral becomes the "shepherd" of Biblical and Christian metaphor. The combination of Christian and pagan

¹ The name seems restricted in common use to poems written in accordance with a more or less classical pattern. Otherwise the list would have to be extended to include Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

prospects of immortality in lines 170-185 is much less happy. Palgrave explains the classical allusions in his notes. There is an interesting exposition of the passage on priesthood in Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, sections 20-25.

As the poem is one of the longest in the book, a brief analysis may be useful.

Lines 1-22. Introductory: the poet prepares to pluck the garland of a mourner, and calls on the Muses to inspire him.

Lines 23-49. Lycidas and the poet were fellow-"shepherds"; now he is gone and the poet is desolate.

Lines 50-63. The poet makes as though to reproach the Nymphs for leaving Lycidas to his fate; but, alas, their help could have availed nought.

Lines 64-84. The apparent futility of such high artistic aims as Lycidas and the poet pursued (first digression).

Lines 85-102. The cause of the wreck remains a mystery.

Lines 103-131. The mourners: Camus (Cambridge) and St Peter, who mourns for Lycidas as a faithful shepherd in a faithless generation. He denounces the Laudian courtier-priests in true Puritan style (second digression).

Lines 132-164. The floral tribute to the bier of Lycidas—an empty bier for his body is lost at sea.

Lines 165-185. Yet though the body is lost at sea, Lycidas "is not dead"; he has entered into immortality.

Lines 186-193. A quiet ending.

67, 68, 69. XC., XCI., XCII.

BEAUMONT: TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY. SHIRLEY: THE LAST CONQUEROR. SHIRLEY: DEATH THE LEVELLER. Three short lyrics on the all-prevailing power of Death. Most readers will prefer the last, if

only for the lovely couplet at the end in which the one exception to Death's power is described. Shirley may fairly be called the last of the Elizabethan dramatists. He was only forty-eight when the Puritans closed the theatres in 1642, and he lived through the first six years of the restored monarchy.

70. XCIII.
MILTON: WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY. A sonnet written when it seemed likely that the Cavaliers would break into London after the victorious march from Edgehill. They were, however, stopped by the London "trained bands" at Turnham Green. It illustrates Milton's almost intolerably lofty conception of his own vocation as a poet, since he compares himself with Pindar and Euripides. Palgrave explains classical allusions. In the first line, "colonel" is a three-syllable word, which our modern slovenly speech has reduced to two.

71. XCIV.
MILTON: ON HIS BLINDNESS. An elaborately perfect sonnet, as close packed as that on the *Massacre* (64. lxxxvii.). Notice the effect of resigned contentment in the last line, due, I think, to the fact that that line alone consists of a single and completed sentence. Great poetry, like great painting, is, as Ruskin remarked, full of these little bits of concealed cunning.

72. XCV.
WOTTON: CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE. The writer of this guileless little poem was a diplomatist, and responsible for the description of an ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country." He afterwards became Provost of Eton.

74. XCVII.
HERBERT: THE GIFTS OF GOD. The only example in *The Golden Treasury* from George Herbert, whose

volume of religious verse, *The Temple*, was for many pious seventeenth-century homes what *The Christian Year* was for such homes of the nineteenth century. The idea that the restlessness of life on earth is a necessary part of the Divine Plan recurs again and again in Browning. See, in particular, the poem *Rephan* in his last volume. The pun in lines 16 and 17 is to us a strange blemish, but Herbert and his contemporaries liked such things. Even Shakespeare disfigures a pathetic little speech of Juliet's with an elaborate threefold pun on "I," "eye" and "aye." There is a little poem of Herbert's in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 548.

75. XCVIII.

VAUGHAN: THE RETREAT. The general idea is exactly the same as that of Wordsworth's great *Immortality Ode* (287. cccxxviii.), with which it should be compared. Wordsworth, of course, probes the mystery far deeper and reaches consolation; Vaughan ends on a note of unavailing regret.

76, 77. XCIX., C.

MILTON: TWO SONNETS. Milton and Horace are not poets that we naturally associate, but the Puritan is here obviously imitating the quiet urbanity of the "invitation" odes of the Roman poet.

79. CIII.

CRASHAW: WISHES FOR THE SUPPOSED MISTRESS. Instead of commenting on this pretty and fantastic poem, I will insert here a very different piece of Crashaw, and that by which he best deserves to be remembered:

UPON THE BOOK AND PICTURE OF THE SERAPHICAL SAINT TERESA

O THOU undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;

By all the eagle in thee, all the dove ;
 By all thy lives and deaths of love ;
 By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
 And by thy thirsts of love more large than they ;
 By all thy brim-fill'd bowls of fierce desire,
 By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire ;
 By the full kingdom of that final kiss
 That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee His ;
 By all the Heav'n that thou hast in Him
 (Fair sister of the seraphim) ;
 By all of Him we have in thee ;
 Leave nothing of myself in me.
 Let me so read thy life, that I
 Unto all life of mine may die !

82. CVIII.

HERRICK : COUNSEL TO GIRLS. On Herrick and his school, more than on any other group of poets in *The Golden Treasury*, it is difficult to write notes—and also unnecessary. I would only say, Read them ; and if you get the chance, Sing them. There are dozens of musical settings.

83. CIX.

LOVELACE : TO LUCASTA ON GOING TO THE WARS. Lovelace is finer than Herrick, in that he strikes us as more in earnest. But he is less skilful, or less careful. It is perhaps almost unkind to call attention to the odd picture the reader may evoke if he lingers too curiously over lines 7 and 8.

84. CX.

WOTTON : ELIZABETH OF BOHEMIA. This beautiful and unhappy lady was the daughter of James I., wife of the Elector Palatine, mother of Prince Rupert, and ancestress of the House of Hanover and our present King. Wotton did his best to serve her interests as a diplomatic agent at Vienna.

86.

DARLEY: THE LOVELINESS OF LOVE. We may commend Palgrave more for omitting this poem from his last edition than for inserting it in his first. "The advantages of a plain wife" is no doubt a *possible* subject for a poem, but it requires more skilful handling than this.

90. CXVI.

JONSON: TO CELIA. It might be thought that nothing could profitably be said on *Drink to Me Only*. There is perhaps only this much: the familiar musical setting spoils the first line, as my quotation above illustrates. The line runs:

"Drink to me—only with thine eyes."

But the tune forces us to sing:

"Drink to me only—with thine eyes."

The tune fits all right in the second verse. But the first verse affords a good illustration of the almost hopeless difficulty of securing the "ideal marriage" of poetry and music.

CXVIII.

HERRICK: CORINNA'S MAYING. Try the experiment of reading this poem (aloud, of course) as quickly as you intelligently can. Slow down a bit in the last verse. It is one of the few poems that gains by such treatment. The idea was, of course, suggested to me by Dr Ernest Walker's delightful musical setting.

99. CXXVII.

LOVELACE: TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON. The Greek poets would occasionally use the name of a river or spring to express plain drinking water, and it is this practice that Lovelace imitates in line 10. Such quaintness is rather delightful to the Classical

scholar, for the sake of the classical parallels it suggests to him, but other readers may well be excused if they find it a trifle absurd.

101. CXXIX.

SUCKLING: ENCOURAGEMENTS TO A LOVER. This poem, it will be generally agreed, has a good ending.

102. CXXX.

COWLEY: A SUPPLICATION. My remark on the preceding might here be reversed. The poem as a whole makes a touching picture of the devoted and rejected lover, but when he tells us he veritably intends to die, our sympathies are a little bit cooled towards him. Why is this? Because, after a study of the symptoms, we feel pretty sure he's not going to die.

104. CXXXII.

FLETCHER: MELANCHOLY. This little song strikes me as much less than half in earnest. This worshipper of melancholy has an Elizabethan twinkle in his eye all the time.

III. CXLII.

MARVELL: THOUGHTS IN A GARDEN. This and other "garden" poems of Marvell have been much admired, and it must be my fault that they leave me cold. The fifth verse, however, is surely intolerable. "What wondrous life is this I lead!"—by the time the reader has got to the last two lines of the verse he will agree that it is a "wondrous life" indeed, and perhaps he will entertain suspicions of the poet's sobriety. The last two lines of the next verse are delightful:

"Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade."

I like also the pretty wit of the last verse but one. The curious reader shall be left to find out for himself whether Marvell was a bachelor.

112, 113. CXLIV., CXLV.

MILTON: L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO. These odes to Mirth and to Melancholy (in its gentler and almost pleasurable sense) are companion pieces, constructed on the same plan. Both are rich in exquisitely delicate descriptions which dovetail together so neatly that the firmness of design throughout is hardly noticed. A brief and prosaic analysis of each will, I believe, help those who come to the poems for the first time; but it will only annoy others, and these are advised to ignore the rest of this note.

L'Allegro opens bidding Melancholy avaunt. The poet then hails Mirth and her kindred spirits, Love, Wine, the West Wind, Dawn, and finally Liberty. Then follows a series of scenes or pictures congenial to Mirth: Morning with all its accompaniments; the Cottage couple with their simple joys and quaint superstitions; the City with its gaities; and finally—Milton's favourite climax—Music.

Il Penseroso opens bidding "vain deluding joys" avaunt. The poet then hails Melancholy and her kindred spirits, Wisdom, Peace, Asceticism, Leisure, Contemplation, Silence. Then follows the series of congenial scenes or pictures, as before: Night with nightingale and curfew; Study, and in particular Poetry; Morning, spent in woodland solitude; Religion, and the cloister. Milton seems a long way from Puritanism here, but these are early poems. Palgrave supplies notes on many classical allusions.

115. CXLVII.

MILTON: AT A SOLEMN MUSIC. Milton evidently felt that in music Art reaches nearest to heaven, for the idea of this noble poem occurs also in the *Nativity Ode* with which Book Second opens (lines 125-148). The idea is a natural one; for, while the other arts, poetry, painting, and sculpture, provide an

inspired commentary on the things of this world, music conveys a message all its own, as though from another sphere. Browning has expressed this idea in *Abt Vogler*, the poem which stands on a level with this of Milton as the finest tribute of English poetry to music. I quote two verses, but the poem should be read as a whole :

“ All through my keys that gave their sounds to a
wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish
flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I
painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process
so wonder-worth :
Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect
proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the
tale is told ;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to
laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list
enrolled :—

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will
that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and,
lo, they are !
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed
to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth
sound, but a star.
Consider it well : each tone of our scale in itself is
nought ;
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all
is said :

Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my
thought:

And, there! Ye have heard and seen: consider
and bow the head!"

Sir Hubert Parry's setting of *Blest Pair of Sirens* is one of the finest modern English choral works.

CXLVIII., CXLIX., CL.

HABINGTON: NOX NOCTI INDICAT SCIENTIAM. NORRIS: HYMN TO DARKNESS. VAUGHAN: A VISION. Three religious, though by no means Christian, poems. For their subject, the nothingness of man, beside the vastnesses of Time and Space, represents the point at which all religious feeling may be said to begin, though it will be but an unprofitable religion that stops there and goes no further. The first sets man beside the Stars, the second compares his little day with the realm of Darkness, the third sees the World as a speck amidst Eternity.

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

N.B.—The seven lines of Vaughan printed as poem cl. are but the opening lines of a most magnificent "Vision" which I here insert. Speaking above of the fragment selected by Palgrave, I grouped it with its two predecessors as "religious though by no means Christian." Such a description would be quite untrue of the complete poem.

THE WORLD

I SAW Eternity the other night,
Like a great *Ring* of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;

And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow mov'd, in which the world
And all her train were hurl'd.
The dotting Lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain ;
Near him his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
Wit's four delights ;
With gloves and knots and silly snares of pleasure,
Yet his dear Treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.

The darksome Statesman, hung with weights and
woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog, mov'd there so slow,
He did not stay nor go ;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses, scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digg'd the Mole and, lest his ways be found,
Work'd underground
Where he did clutch his prey. But one did see
That policy ;
Churches and altars fed him ; Perjuries
Were gnats and flies
It rained about him blood and tears ; but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
In fear of thieves.
Thousands were there as frantic as himself,
And hugged each one his pelf ;

The down-right epicure plac'd heav'n in sense
 And scorn'd pretence ;
 While others, slipt into a wide excess,
 Said little less ;
 The weaker sort slight, trivial wars enslave,
 Who think them brave,
 And poor, despised truth sat counting by
 Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
 And sing and weep, soar'd up into the *Ring* ;
 But most would use no wing.
 O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
 Before true light !
 To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
 Because it shows the way,
 The way that from this dead and dark abode
 Leads up to God,
 A way where you might tread the Sun, and be
 More bright than he !
 But as I did their madness so discuss,
 One whispered thus,
 " This Ring the Bride-groom did for none provide,
 But for his Bride."

The "Statesman" described with such vindictive passion is no doubt Cromwell, at whose hands the Vaughan family suffered much. The modern reader will prefer to fit the cap elsewhere.

116. CLI.

DRYDEN: ALEXANDER'S FEAST; OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC. This like the only other poem of Dryden in the book (63. lxxxvi.) is in praise of music. In *Alexander's Feast* the musician hypnotises the poet, and leads him through the martial, the tragic, and the amorous mood, to a wild frenzy in which he

rises up and sets forth to burn to the ground the temples and dwellings of his Persian enemies. The ode ends with a stanza to Cecilia, the patron saint of the organ, for this ode, like the earlier, is an *Ode for Saint Cecilia's Day*. It would be interesting to compare these two odes with the long poems of Milton, the only other works on the same scale in Book Second. The great superiority of Milton's poems is obvious, and largely perhaps beyond analysis, but I would suggest one point. In poems of this length "arrangement" counts for much, and in Dryden the arrangement—the order, I mean, in which the various parts of the subject are treated, and the transition from one part to another—is rather obvious and mechanical. We feel that Dryden may well have made a scheme in note-form and then worked to it. In Milton's poems, on the other hand, the arrangement seems to grow out of the very nature and spirit of the poem. It is not obvious, for we feel we could never have devised it ourselves, if faced with the same subject; and yet, once Milton has devised it, it seems not mechanical, but natural. In this matter of arrangement, the second ode of Dryden is greatly superior to the first, but as greatly inferior to the *Nativity Ode* of Milton.

BOOK THIRD

BOOK THIRD, it must be admitted, stands on a rather lower level than the other books of *The Golden Treasury*. The fault lies in part with the poets of the period it covers, the eighteenth century; in part with Palgrave himself, who in his first edition entirely omits, and in his last but inadequately represents, the greatest lyric poet of the century, William Blake. Of Blake I will say no more here, for I have inserted at the end of my notes on Book Third a small selection of his poems, with some remarks on him and them.

Blake apart—and, spiritually and chronologically, he really belongs almost more to Book Fourth than Book Third—there is something fundamentally inadequate about nearly all the lyric poetry of the eighteenth century. As Blake himself says (ccviii.):

“The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few.”

The main literary energies of the eighteenth century were expended in quite other directions. They produced our greatest historian, Gibbon, our greatest biographer, Boswell, our subtlest philosopher, Berkeley, our wisest orator, Burke. Even in the field of poetry the master spirit, for the first half of the century, was Pope, in whose hands poetry diverged as far from lyric spirit as it possibly can while still remaining poetry. Dryden has already diverted the heroic strain of poetry to the uses of party politics (*Absalom and Achitophel*). Pope

carried the same process further when he devoted his muse to philosophic common-sense (*The Essay on Man*), ironic literary criticism (*The Dunciad*), and mock-heroic social comedy (*The Rape of the Lock*). It will have been already noticed by the readers of the two previous books that the poems of each book fall naturally into two groups. In the Elizabethan book these groups are the songs and the sonnets. The contrast is complete, but we get no sense of discordance in passing from the one to the other. They are contrasted moods of the same temperament. I spoke of them above as *scherzo* and *andante*; but, be it understood, the *scherzo* and the *andante* are from one and the same symphony. Indeed Shakespeare, the greatest of the song writers, is also the greatest of the sonneteers. In Book Second the twofold division persists, Herrick and others carrying on the stream of Song, Milton the graver strain of the Sonnet, and with the sonnets, for our present purpose, we may group the Odes. The two types here lie further apart, and, with the rather unimportant exception of Marvell, no writer contributes to both groups. Still, there is, I think, a real kinship of spirit between them, just as there was a kinship of spirit between their political counterparts the Cavaliers and the Roundheads, a kinship which makes the Great Rebellion the most chivalrous and humane of civil wars. But when we pass to Book Third the division between the two groups has become a chasm. On the one side are the stately and somewhat academic odes of Gray and Collins; on the other, homespun lyrics and ballads of Burns and other Scots, with which may be grouped the few English ballads of a similar spirit, such as *Sally in our Alley*, and *Black-eyed Susan*. *The Progress of Poesy: a Pindaric Ode* and

Sally in our Alley!—it seems almost absurd that the same term “poetry” should be flung so wide as to cover works that have nothing in common except the superficial and mechanical fact of metre. And in fact both are incomplete poetry: the first lacks the humanity, the second the dignity which are essential ingredients of great poetry. They are both masterpieces of a sort, but masterpieces in defective styles.

None the less there are a few poems, a very few, that combine humanity and dignity and thus rise to the heights of inspiration that the first two books have made us familiar with. The reader may make his own mental list of these, and doubtless it would not be quite the same as mine. On two poems, however, I hope we shall agree. One is Gray’s *Elegy* (147. clxxxvii.), where Gray by an immense and conscious effort rises to simplicity; the other, Cowper’s *Loss of the Royal George* (129. clxv.). Cowper had perhaps a better balanced poetic endowment than either Gray, Collins, or Burns, but mental disease or melancholia warped and spoiled him.

Some general remarks on Gray and Collins will be found in the note on cliii., and on Burns in the note on 139. clxxvi.

117. CLII.

GRAY: ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE. A very charming little ode, especially in some of the phrases in the descriptive parts. What could be neater and prettier than

“Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground.”

CLIII.

COLLINS: ODE TO SIMPLICITY. Gray and Collins are names as inseparable in eighteenth-century poetry as

Arnold and Clough a century later, and the grouping of their poems in *The Golden Treasury* makes it easy to compare their qualities. Both were scholars and recluses; both produced but little, and that of rare finish; both broke away from the fashionable heroic couplet; both essayed the elaborate ode on Dryden's model, as in Gray's *Progress of Poesy* and Collins' *The Passions* (140, 141. clxxvii., clxxviii.); both are at their best when they use a less grandiose measure, as in Collins' *Ode to Evening* and Gray's *Elegy* (146, 147. clxxxvi., clxxxvii.). The last poem alone has made Gray's name a household word, which Collins' is not: but some will prefer the quaint fancy and the bolder symbolism of the less famous poet. The *Ode to Simplicity* is, oddly enough, far from simple. The poet looks back to the great age of Greece as the time when poetry wooed Simplicity and thereby found a way to touch the heart. Neither Imperial Rome nor Renaissance Italy, nor, he implies, his own generation, have succeeded here. To such a task Collins devotes himself. But it was to be Gray, not Collins, that wooed Simplicity with triumphant success.

118. CLIV.

POPE: THE QUIET LIFE. This is in the style of Horace, and Horace, it must be confessed, at his smuggest. It was perhaps worth while to include something from so great a writer as Pope; but Pope is the least lyrical of poets.

122. CLVIII.

THOMSON: RULE, BRITANNIA. The first "patriotic" poem we have come to. It was written for performance in *Alfred: a Masque*, produced in 1740, in the heat of the war fever engendered by Captain Jenkins' ear. The great series of wars, mostly against France, which then began and lasted with short intervals till Waterloo, was responsible

for most of our popular patriotic songs, *Hearts of Oak*, *The Bay of Biscay*, *The British Grenadiers*, and the rest; also for several naval and military poems that appear in *The Golden Treasury* (129. clxv.; 205, 206, 207. ccxli., ccl., ccli.; 215. cclix.; 218. cclxii.). Experience shows that it is difficult to rise above a rather noisy mediocrity in this type. There are beautiful poems such as Cowper's *Royal George* and Wolfe's *Burial of Sir John Moore*, but both record tragedies. Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England*, however, is purely patriotic and also truly great. Perhaps the reason why the others strike a false note in our ears is that we know so much more about war than did these too light-hearted poets. But a fraction of our manhood was then engaged, and it was perhaps possible for most at home to watch the performances of our tiny professional armies with an excitement unalloyed by personal anxiety. It is salutary to turn from the poetic expression of this sort of patriotism to Blake's War poem, which I have printed at the end of my notes on Book Third. Blake strikes a terribly "modern" note.

123. CLIX.

GRAY: THE BARD. A very vigorous piece of rhetoric, which loses some of the power it might have over the modern reader by reason of the fact that the whole situation is unreal to him. The poem is in fact a curse on King Edward I., spoken by a Welsh bard from a mountain-side to the retreating army of England. The central part is spoken, not by the bard himself, but by the spirits of his slain companions. Now the modern reader knows (unless he be a Scotsman) that Edward I. was one of our few really great kings, that his dream of a united Great Britain was statesmanlike and magnificent, that the Welsh "kingdom" of Llewelyn was little better than

a nest of mountain brigands, and that the massacre of the bards is a "myth." I believe these things ought not to affect our judgment of the poem, but as a matter of fact they do. The concluding portion, claiming the greatness of the Tudors and Shakespeare as a Welsh rather than an English greatness, strikes us as altogether too quaint. The reader will assume that Gray was a perfervid Welshman. Not at all; but he was caught by the mid-eighteenth-century enthusiasm for primitive Celtic poetry, an enthusiasm which the poet-forgers, Chatterton and Macpherson, turned to their own profit.

124. CLX.

COLLINS: ODE WRITTEN IN 1746. One might call this the "Gray's Elegy" of Collins, short though it be, so perfectly finished is the expression of these memorial lines.

129. CLXV.

COWPER: LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE. This is no doubt much the finest poem ever dedicated to the affairs of the British Navy. I have made some remarks about this class of poetry under *Rule, Britannia* (122. clviii.). I wish this very simple strain of Cowper's muse had been represented again in *The Golden Treasury*. It appears in some of his hymns, and I will insert the best of them, familiar though it be, as not unworthy of *Golden Treasury* rank. It is a great mistake to suppose that because nine-tenths of any hymn-book is pious doggerel, the remaining tenth is pious doggerel also.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps on the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never-failing skill
 He treasures up His bright designs,
 And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take ;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and will break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust Him for His grace ;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
 And scan His work in vain ;
 God is His own interpreter
 And he will make it plain."

130. CLXVI. 131. CLXVII.

GAY: BLACK-EYED SUSAN. CAREY: SALLY IN OUR ALLEY. Whether this sort of article is to be called 'poetry' or merely "verse" is a matter of definitions, which we will not go into. All I want to suggest is that Carey's poem is very good of its kind, and Gay's is not. Carey's poem is all of a piece; he never forgets that he is "in the alley," and he gives us the humour and pathos that belong to the place. But what of Susan, whose sailor slides down the rigging as "a sweet lark, high poised in air . . ." as soon as he hears her voice, and treats her and us to four verses of the best stage sentiment, only interrupted by the boatswain's "dreadful word"? Susan could hardly do less than "wave her lily hand," as, in fact, she does!

135. CLXXI.

ROGERS: THE SLEEPING BEAUTY. I only call attention to the singular fact that Rogers (1763-1855), though a thoroughly eighteenth-century poet, actually outlived all the poets of the Romantic movement (Book Fourth) and was the last to die of all the poets included by Palgrave in *The Golden Treasury*.

CLXXIV.

BLAKE: LOVE'S SECRET. The reader must decide for himself whether he finds in this tiny song a touch of magic which sets it apart from everything we have so far read in Book Third. I know nothing of Blake's MSS., but I observe that in Sir Walter Raleigh's edition the poem appears without the first verse, and the last lines run :

“ Silently, invisibly—
O ! was no deny.”

I rather prefer Raleigh's version, for the first verse with its general enunciation of the theme robs the poem of something of its most surprising terseness.

138. CLXXV. 139. CLXXVI.

GOLDSMITH: WHEN LOVELY WOMAN. BURNS: YE BANKS AND BRAES. I quote a most illuminating passage from Mr Chesterton's *Browning*, dealing with these two poems :

“ A man might read through these two poems a great many times without happening to realise that they are two poems on exactly the same subject—the subject of a trusting woman deserted by a man. And the whole difference—the difference struck by the very first note of the voice of anyone who reads them—is this fundamental difference, that Goldsmith's words are spoken about a certain situation, and Burns' words are spoken in that situation.

“In the transition from one of these lyrics to the other, we have a vital change in the conception of the functions of the poet; a change of which Burns was in many ways the beginning, of which Browning was the culmination.

“Goldsmith writes fully and accurately in the tradition of the old historic idea of what a poet was. The poet, the ‘vates,’ was the supreme and absolute critic of human existence, the chorus to the human drama; he was, to employ two words which when analysed are the same word, either a spectator or a seer. He took a situation, such as the situation of a woman deserted by a man before-mentioned, and he gave, as Goldsmith gives, his own personal and definite decision upon it, entirely based upon general principles, and entirely from the outside. Then, as in this case from *The Golden Treasury*, he has no sooner given judgment than there comes a bitter and confounding cry out of the very heart of the situation itself, which tells us things which would have been quite left out of account by the poet of the general rule. No one, for example, but a person who knew something of the inside of agony would have introduced that touch of the rage of the mourner against the chattering frivolity of nature, ‘Thou’ll break my heart, thou bonny bird.’ We find and could find no such touch in Goldsmith. We have to arrive at the conclusion, therefore, that the vates or poet in his absolute capacity is defied and overthrown by this new method of what may be called the songs of experience.”¹

So far Mr Chesterton. I would only add that the distinction he draws is not merely a mechanical distinction between poems “in the first person”

¹ *Robert Browning*, by G. K. Chesterton, p. 169.

and poems "in the third." It is quite possible, and common, to write "in the first person," and yet to write from outside, as a "vates." To take a rather crude example: Cibber's *The Blind Boy* (119. clv.) purports to be the blind boy's experience, but it most certainly is not. It is a kindly but very minor vates, sentimentalising on the blind-boy theme.

140. CLXXVII. 141. CLXXVIII.

GRAY: THE PROGRESS OF POESY. COLLINS: THE PASSIONS. These two fine odes represent the two poets in their stateliest and most elevated though not their most truly inspired mood. Their subjects are really the same, for Collins is thinking quite as much of poetry as of music in its narrower sense. Gray presents us a historical summary after the manner of *The Bard*, his other more vehement but less-pleasing poem in the same style. The "progress of poesy" is traced from its heavenly beginnings—the "heaven" is that of Greek, not Christian, religion—through its first rude essays among "man's feeble race," in the dim North and in "Chili's boundless forests," up to its triumphs in classical Greece, and then by way of Rome to England. Collins, more after the manner of Dryden's two odes (63, 116. lxxxvi., cli.), analyses the musical expression of the various passions. Gray ends with a modest tribute to himself as the humble follower of Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden: Collins, more modest still, finds that the muse has quitted earth and prays for her return. His ending is in exactly the same vein as that of his *Ode to Simplicity*.

CLXXIX.

SMART: THE SONG OF DAVID. The poem from which these three verses are taken has a most extraordinary history. Smart, one of the dullest of eighteenth-century versifiers, was reduced by drink and poverty to insanity. While in an asylum he produced

The Song of David, a rhapsody of some six hundred lines, rather monotonous and incoherent as a whole perhaps, but full of passages of inspired vigour such as this before us. Later, he was released from confinement, and returned to his trivial round of scribbling. The edition of his "works" published shortly after his death omits the only poem worth publishing at all, regarding it as the product of his insanity. A singular illustration of the view that poetry is "a kind of madness"! Browning has an interesting poem on him in his rather dull volume of *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in their Day*.

142. CLXXXII.

GRAY: ODE ON THE SPRING. An ode so similar in scope to the same poet's *Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude* (117. clii.) that I need only refer the reader back to that.

143. CLXXXIII.

COWPER: THE POPLAR FIELD. A pretty little poem, rather spoilt by the morbid melancholy of the last eight lines. 162, cciv. and ccv. end on the same note. Such sentiments came from the depths of Cowper's heart; they are no mere pose, as the melancholy of Byron is often said to have been. Cowper really suffered in this way, and it spoilt him as a poet.

144. CLXXXIV.

BURNS: TO A MOUSE. Many poets have addressed the birds of the air and some the beasts of the field and the forest, but I cannot think of any other poem addressed to a rodent. But this is not the chief distinction of this delightful poem. The other poets speak to their nightingales and what-not as professional poets, exploring their own emotions. Burns, the ploughman, speaks as one son of the soil might speak to another. If these living creatures

were gifted with an understanding of human speech, I think the mouse would be both touched and pleased by this poem, but I doubt if the skylark would care much for Wordsworth and Shelley, or the nightingale for Keats.

146. CLXXXVI.

COLLINS: TO EVENING. The finest by far of Collins' odes. It is as perfect in its way as Gray's *Elegy*, which follows it. Each verse contributes its deft touches to a picture of high-wrought beauty and perfect peace. Notice the very original rhymeless stanza. The charmingly quaint third stanza must be, I think, an intentional reminiscence of *Macbeth*, III. ii. 40:

"Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere, to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal."

147. CLXXXVII.

GRAY: ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD. The whole poem seems so "inevitable," that it is interesting to know that it cost Gray immense trouble. There are in existence several stanzas written for the *Elegy* which his final judgment rejected. He also maintained that it was not his best work, a curious example of the faulty taste of his age, to which he was liable as a critic, even after he had risen above it as a poet. The poem needs no explaining. If I may hazard a personal preference, I would say that I rather wish the poet had not turned, as he turns in the last nine verses, from the contemplation of the country churchyard to the contemplation of his own future grave. Still, such an abstention would have deprived us of the "Epitaph" with its perfect ending.

156. CXCVII.

BURNS: JOHN ANDERSON. Of the many Scottish lyrics which call for no comment, this seems to me the best, along with *Ye Banks and Braes* (139. clxxvi.). The latter presents love in its most cruel phase, the former in its kindest.

158. CXCIX.

GRAY: ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE. Perhaps it is the modern "Public School spirit," a spirit so faulty and yet so fine, that puts me utterly out of sympathy with this poem. But surely there is something mawkish about the whole idea of it. School is a training for after life or it is nothing, and no training can base itself on ignorance, pleading the excuse of Gray's last two lines. If life were as wretched a thing as Gray says it is, school had better prepare its "little victims" for its horrors: but, of course, life is nothing of the kind. Verse three shows eighteenth-century artificiality at its worst. Gray should never have left the country churchyard for the Public School cricket-field. I will quote as a pendant to this poem the verses dedicated to another school by a ruder poet of a later age:

"Forty years on, when afar and asunder

Parted are those who are singing to-day,

When you look back, and forgetfully wonder

What you were like in your work or your play,

Then, it may be, there will often come o'er you

Glimpses of notes like the catch of a song—

Visions of boyhood shall float them before you,

Echoes of dreamland shall bear them along.

Follow up!

Till the field ring again and again

With the tramp of the twenty-two men.

Follow up!

Routs and discomfitures, rushes and rallies,
Bases attempted, and rescued, and won,
Strife without anger, and art without malice—
How will it seem to you forty years on?
Then, you will say, not a feverish minute
Strained the weak heart, and the wavering knee,
Never the battle raged hottest, but in it
Neither the last nor the faintest were we!
Follow up! etc.

O the great days, in the distance enchanted,
Days of fresh air, in the rain and the sun,
How we rejoiced as we struggled and panted—
Hardly believable, forty years on!
How we discoursed of them, one with another,
Auguring triumph and balancing fate,
Loved the ally with the heart of a brother,
Hated the foe with a playing at hate!
Follow up! etc.

Forty years on, growing older and older,
Shorter in wind, as in memory long,
Feeble of foot, and rheumatic of shoulder,
What will it help you that once you were strong?
God give us bases to guard or beleaguer,
Games to play out, whether earnest or fun,
Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager,
Twenty and thirty and forty years on!
Follow up! etc.”

(“Follow up!” was a call employed in the Harrow variety of football, where a goal is called a “base.”)
159. CCI.

GRAY: HYMN TO ADVERSITY. A very fine ode, which should be compared with Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* (208. cclii.). The metre is the same in each, and the whole spirit of the poems, from the opening

invocations to the concluding prayers, is similar. Wordsworth's is no doubt the finer poem. He gives us less of mythological trappings and more of real human experience, and his last verse but one is quite beyond the range of Gray.

160. CCII.

COWPER: THE SOLITUDE OF ALEXANDER SELKIRK. Selkirk, a real person, and the prototype of Robinson Crusoe, was marooned for five years (1704-1709) on Juan Fernandez Island, off Valparaiso. The poem is on a low level of inspiration, as we are made to feel with quite a shock when Cowper, by the third line of verse three, calls to our mind one of the loveliest of the Psalms, and the standard of lyric poetry set thereby. By the side of that phrase, incongruous here and slightly misquoted, all the rest of the poem sinks to doggerel.

161. CCIII.

COWPER: TO MARY UNWIN. The only sonnet in Book Third; it is much nearer to Wordsworth in spirit than to Milton. Mrs Unwin was a clergyman's widow, in whose household Cowper lived for most of his life. But for his occasional attacks of insanity he would probably have married her.

164. CCVI.

J. COLLINS: TO-MORROW. I must protest against Palgrave's note in which he exalts this "truly noble poem . . . the climax of simple sublimity" to "first-rate poetical rank, side by side with the subtle sweetness of Shelley, the grandeur of Gray and Milton," etc. It is really no more than amiable doggerel. The sentiments are admirable, but if admirable sentiments alone could make good poetry, the worst hymns in the hymn-book could put in a claim. The jingling metre is itself unskilfully managed, and accents sometimes fall with a jerk on the most unlikely syllables. On the quite different

question of the rank of *Sally in our Alley* (also raised in Palgrave's note on this poem) I have spoken in my introductory remarks to Book Third.

APPENDIX TO BOOK THIRD—BLAKE

THE most serious shortcoming of *The Golden Treasury* is in the matter of Blake, who appears not at all in the first edition, and only gets four little poems, not all of these among his best, in the last. The shortcoming can hardly be made a matter of blame. Blake himself ignored his immediate predecessors, and drew his inspiration direct from Milton and the Elizabethans. He was in turn neglected by the poets of the Romantic movement and Early Victorian age. No life of him appeared till Gilchrist's in 1863, no first-rate appreciation till Swinburne's essay in 1868, and it was not till 1893 that his complete poetical works were edited and published. To-day it is safe to say that he is more "alive" than any poet who wrote between Milton and Wordsworth: even his most hostile critics admit this.¹ His lyric poetry is not large in bulk, and occupied comparatively little of his energies. He was as remarkable a painter and engraver as a poet, and even among his written works the "prophetical books," a strange wilderness of obscure mythology, occupy a far larger space than his lyrics. Of the lyrics here printed, 1 and 2 are early songs in a quite Elizabethan manner. 3, *A War Song to Englishmen*, needs no comment to-day. I have contrasted it with the commoner type of "war song" in my remarks on *Rule, Britannia* (122. clviii.). 4-11 are from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience, showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul*; 12 is part of a longer

¹ For a vigorous attack on Blake as crude and unpolished—and he often is—see Mr William Watson's essay, *Pencraft*.

poem, made up throughout of epigrammatic couplets, quaint, searching, and often obscure ; 13, the prologue to the prophetic book called *Milton*, is a most thrilling summons to every kind of high endeavour.

I will now leave the poems to speak for themselves. Much more might be said, for Blake was nothing if not a philosopher, or, as he would have said himself, a prophet, and several of these poems, notably *Auguries of Innocence*, can only be fully understood in relation to his profound and enigmatic philosophy of life. But that I must leave to those who care to pursue the matter further in any of the many excellent essays and books on Blake that have appeared in recent years. The reader is at present invited to admire their astonishing beauty and ignore their occasional obscurity.

(1)

LOVE'S PRISONER

How sweet I roam'd from field to field
 And tasted all the summer's pride,
 Till I the prince of love beheld
 Who in the sunny beams did glide !

He show'd me lilies for my hair,
 And blushing roses for my brow ;
 He led me through his gardens fair
 Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May dews my wings were wet,
 And Phœbus fir'd my vocal rage ;
 He caught me in his silken net,
 And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
 Then, laughing, sports and plays with me ;
 Then stretches out my golden wing,
 And mocks my loss of liberty.

(2)

LOVE'S TRAGEDY

My silks and fine array,
 My smiles and languished air,
 By love are driv'n away ;
 And mournful lean Despair
 Brings me yew to deck my grave ;
 Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heav'n
 When springing buds unfold ;
 O why to him was't giv'n
 Whose heart is wintry cold ?
 His breast is love's all-worshipped tomb,
 Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
 Bring me a winding sheet ;
 When I my grave have made
 Let winds and tempests beat :
 Then down I'll lie as cold as clay.
 True love doth pass away !

(3)

A WAR SONG TO ENGLISHMEN

PREPARE, prepare the iron helm of war,
 Bring forth the lots, cast in the spacious orb ;
 Th' Angel of Fate turns them with mighty hands,
 And casts them out upon the darken'd earth !

Prepare, prepare.

Prepare your hearts for Death's cold hand ! prepare
 Your souls for flight, your bodies for the earth ;
 Prepare your arms for glorious victory !
 Prepare your eyes to meet a holy God !

Prepare, prepare.

Whose fatal scroll is that? Methinks 'tis mine!
 Why sinks my heart, why faltereth my tongue?
 Had I three lives, I'd die in such a cause,
 And rise, with ghosts, over the well-fought field.
 Prepare, prepare

The arrows of Almighty God are drawn!
 Angels of Death stand in the low'ring heavens!
 Thousands of souls must seek the realms of light,
 And walk together on the clouds of heaven!
 Prepare, prepare.

Soldiers, prepare! Our cause is Heaven's cause;
 Soldiers, prepare! Be worthy of our cause:
 Prepare to meet our fathers in the sky:
 Prepare, O troops that are to fall to-day!
 Prepare, prepare.

(4)

NURSE'S SONG

(A Song of Innocence)

WHEN the voices of children are heard on the green,
 And laughing is heard on the hill,
 My heart is at rest within my breast,
 And everything else is still.

“Then come home, my children, the sun is gone
 down,
 And the dews of night arise;
 Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
 Till morning appears in the skies.”

“No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
 And we cannot go to sleep:
 Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
 And the hills are all covered with sheep.”

“ Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.”
And the little ones leaped and shoutèd and laugh’d
And all the hills echoèd.

(5)

NURSE’S SONG

(A Song of Experience)

WHEN the voices of children are heard on the green
And whisp’rings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
And my face turns green and pale.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise ;
Your spring and your day are wasted in play,
And your winter and night in disguise.

(6)

THE LITTLE BOY LOST

(A Song of Innocence)

“ FATHER ! father ! where are you going ?
O do not walk so fast.
Speak, father, speak to your little boy,
Or else I shall be lost.”

The night was dark, no father was there ;
The child was wet with dew ;
The mire was deep, and the child did weep
And away the vapour flew.

(7)

THE LITTLE BOY FOUND

(A Song of Innocence)

THE little boy lost in the lonely fen,
 Led by the wandering light,
 Began to cry ; but God, ever nigh,
 Appear'd like his father, in white.

He kissèd the child, and by the hand led,
 And to his mother brought,
 Who in sorrow pale, through the lonely dale
 Her little boy weeping sought.

(8)

A LITTLE BOY LOST

(A Song of Experience)

“ NOUGHT loves another as itself,
 Nor venerates another so,
 Nor is it possible to Thought
 A greater than itself to know :

“ And, Father, how can I love you
 Or any of my brothers more ?
 I love you like the little bird
 That picks up crumbs around the door.”

The priest sat by and heard the child ;
 In trembling zeal he seized his hair :
 He led him by his little coat,
 And all admired the priestly care.

And standing on the altar high
 “ Lo ! what a fiend is here,” said he,
 “ One who sets reason up for judge
 Of our most holy Mystery.”

The weeping child could not be heard,
 The weeping parents wept in vain ;
 They stripped him to his little shirt,
 And bound him in an iron chain ;

And burned him in a holy place,
 Where many had been burned before :
 The weeping parents wept in vain.
 Are such things done on Albion's shore ?

(9)

INFANT SORROW

*(A Song of Experience)*¹

My mother groan'd, my father wept,
 Into the dangerous world I leapt ;
 Helpless, naked, piping loud,
 Like a fiend, hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
 Striving against my swaddling bands,
 Bound and weary I thought best
 To suck up my mother's breast.

(10)

THE TIGER

(A Song of Experience)

TIGER ! Tiger ! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
 On what wings dare he aspire ?
 What the hand dare seize the fire ?

¹ The companion *Song of Innocence* is in *The Golden Treasury*, clxxx.

And what shoulder, and what art,
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
 And when thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
 In what furnace was thy brain?
 What the anvil? what dread grasp
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
 And water'd heaven with their tears,
 Did He smile His work to see?
 Did He who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(11)

AH, SUNFLOWER!

(A Song of Experience)

AH, sunflower! weary of time,
 Who countest the steps of the sun
 Seeking after that sweet golden climb,
 Where the traveller's journey is done;

Where the youth, pined away with desire,
 And the pale virgin, shrouded in snow,
 Arise from their graves, and aspire
 Where my sunflower wishes to go.

(12)

AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE

To see a world in a grain of sand,
 And a heaven in a wild flower,
 Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
 And eternity in an hour.

A robin redbreast in a cage
 Puts all heaven in a rage.
 A dove-house fill'd with doves and pigeons
 Shudders Hell thro' all its regions.
 A dog starved at his master's gate
 Predicts the ruin of the state.
 A horse misused upon the road
 Calls to Heaven for human blood.
 Each outcry of the hunted hare
 A fibre from the brain does tear.
 A skylark wounded in the wing,
 A cherubim does cease to sing.

He who shall hurt the little wren
 Shall never be beloved by men.
 The wanton boy that kills a fly
 Shall feel the spider's enmity.
 He who torments the chafer's sprite
 Weaves a bower in endless night.
 The caterpillar on the leaf
 Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.
 Kill not the moth or butterfly,
 For the last judgement draweth nigh.

He who mocks the infant's faith
 Shall be mocked in age and death.
 He who shall teach the child to doubt
 The rotting grave shall ne'er get out.

He who respects the infant's faith
 Triumphs over Hell and Death.
 The child's toys and the old man's reasons
 Are the fruits of the two seasons.

The questioner who sits so sly
 Shall never know how to reply.
 He who replies to words of doubt
 Doth put the light of knowledge out.
 A riddle, or a cricket's cry
 Is to doubt a fit reply.
 He who doubts from what he sees
 Will ne'er believe, do what you please.
 If the sun and moon should doubt,
 They'd immediately go out.

(13)

PROLOGUE TO A PROPHECY

AND did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountains green?
 And was the holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
 Bring me my arrows of desire!
 Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
 Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

BOOK FOURTH

THIS is Palgrave's last book, representing the lyric poetry of what he calls "our own age"—rather loosely perhaps, for he wrote in 1861, and very nearly if not quite all the poems had been written by 1824. Yet since his principle was to exclude living writers, he could hardly have used much poetry of later date. Seldom have two generations of poets been chronologically more distinct than our Romantics and our Victorians. Of the great Romantics, three died young: Keats in 1820, aged 25; Shelley in 1822, aged 30; and Byron in 1824, aged 36. The others, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott, were born earlier and also died much later, but all their best poetry, in the two latter cases all their poetry, was written early in life. Wordsworth (1770-1850) had written all the poems printed here before 1825. When we pass to the great Victorians, on the other hand, we find them all long-lived. Browning and Tennyson were both at work in the thirties, but they lived long beyond the date of Palgrave's first edition. The reader will observe that the book is more than twice as long as any of the preceding, and he may be inclined to think this disproportionate. He will be still more inclined to think so if he knows that nearly all the poems—all the best poems, in fact—were written in a period of twenty-four years (1798-1822), as compared with the century, or something near a century, covered by each of the preceding books. But it is not so disproportionate as it looks. The Romantic movement was the greatest period

in the history of English poetry, unless indeed we accept the plea that Shakespeare's four great tragedies outweigh all the poetry that could possibly be put into the scale against them. Even if the plea is accepted, it remains true that the Romantic movement is far the greatest period of our lyric poetry. Outside lyric indeed its performances are only half successes. Scott's ballad-epics have worn a little thin; Wordsworth's long poems are collections of splendid episodes, connected by long stretches of verse that can only be described as harmless; Byron's *Don Juan* is satire, the kind of poetry nearest to prose; and even Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is a "Lyrical Drama." An exhaustive extension of this list would not alter the conclusion. In the sphere of prose, too, the records of this period are abnormally empty. We are in the dull period lying between the great men of Dr Johnson's circle, and the great Victorians, Macaulay, Carlyle, and the rest. Perhaps the best prose of the period was that of two of its poets, Coleridge and Southey. Here then for the first time we have a "book" of lyric poetry devoted to a period that specialised in lyric poetry with truly magnificent results. I will not attempt a detailed exposition of the causes and character of the Romantic movement in general. Many great critics have tried their hand at it, and the aim of this book is not so much wholesale as retail criticism, if the metaphor be allowed, criticism of individual poems. The reader will be able to form his own conclusions as to the general character of the movement when he has studied the hundred manifestations of it offered in *The Golden Treasury*. I will only add a word in protest against a view set forth in Palgrave's own introduction. No reason for the movement, he says, "can be less adequate than that which assigns the splendid national achieve-

ments of our recent poetry to an impulse from the follies and wars which at that time disgraced our foreign neighbours." Perhaps it is easier to see these things aright to-day. For one thing, distance enables us to understand the magnificent idealism underlying the follies and crimes of the French Revolution rather better than was possible to men who grew up at a time when the word "Jacobin" stank in the nostrils of the public much as "Prussian" stinks to-day. For another thing, we can realise, as the peaceful Victorians could not, how a mighty world conflict stirs the blood and the brain to all kinds of unexpected efforts, and not least in the direction of poetry. Certain it is that revolutionary idealism was the very air that Shelley breathed; and that if Wordsworth soon forsook his early hopes, he found an equally potent source of poetic energy in the struggle for freedom led by England against the forces of that same revolution when they had submitted themselves to the bidding of a despot.

For the same reason that I forbear to analyse the Romantic movement, I will offer only brief remarks on the three outstandingly great lyric poets of the period: Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. Many excellent studies on these poets have been written, some of which are mentioned in Appendix II. I would specially call attention to three admirable poems devoted to literary criticism by Mr William Watson, *Wordsworth's Grave*, *Shelley's Centenary*, and *Lines to Edward Dowden*, all contained in his *Selected Poems*. The last in particular is an excellent comparison of all three poets. All three have this in common, that they drew much of their best inspiration from Nature; the names of their poems alone would show this. But they approach it from different angles. In Wordsworth's composition there

were some elements of the character of a preacher, —or if that word suggests a certain prosiness, shall I say some elements of the character of a “prophet,” in the Biblical sense? Nature to him is a store-house of parables, brimming over with human application. He had learnt

“To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity.
 well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.”

(From *Lines composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey.*)
But the glory of Shelley is that he ever remained “a thoughtless youth,” or, let us say, an inspired child. In his nature poetry we have “the child’s faculty of make-believe raised to the *n*th power. He is still at play, save only that his play is such as manhood stops to watch, and his playthings are those which the gods give their children. The universe is his box of toys. He dabbles his fingers in the day-fall. He is gold-dusty with tumbling amidst the stars. He makes bright mischief with the moon. The meteors nuzzle their noses in his hand. He teases into growling the kennelled thunder, and laughs at the shaking of its fiery chain. He dances in and out of the gates of heaven: its floor is littered with his broken fancies. He runs wild over the fields of ether. He chases the rolling world. He gets between the feet of the horses of the sun. He stands in the lap of patient Nature, and twines her loosened tresses after a hundred wilful fashions, to see how she will look nicest in his song.” So wrote Francis

Thompson, in a rhapsody which equals in inspiration the best lyrics of the poet it celebrates.¹

If Wordsworth was the prophet, and Shelley the visionary, Keats was the artist of the Romantic movement, an artist to his very finger-tips and—since he died at twenty-five—little more. He has no gospel such as Wordsworth's, no apocalypse such as Shelley's, to offer us, but in the cunning manipulation of beautiful phrases he surpasses them both.

In this period, too, the sonnet comes to its own again. Wordsworth revives the "political" sonnet of Milton, whose inspiration he expressly invokes (214. cclviii.); he also wrote most of the best nature sonnets in the language. Keats' sonnets, like Shakespeare's, are usually poems of personal experience. The greatest of them all (199. ccxliii), piteous and heroic, seems to carry us beyond Keats the artist to Keats the man, the young man brimming with life and doomed to early death. Shelley's one great sonnet (246. ccxciii.) is an allegory of his political creed.

In one important matter Keats and Shelley stand together and Wordsworth far apart. The poetry of Keats and Shelley is deeply tinged with melancholy. In Keats' case many causes may have contributed: his ill-health, his perverse love-affair, and sometimes, at least, a certain artistic instinct for melancholy as a good subject. With Shelley the cause is more fundamental. Into all relations of life he carried the fanatical and baseless optimism of the purest French revolutionaries, and such temperaments are doomed to chronic disillusionment. Wordsworth's best poetry was written after he had passed the age at which Shelley died. He had already passed through his period of youthful optimism and the consequent depression. He

¹ *Shelley*, by Francis Thompson, p. 42.

writes as one who "sees life steadily and sees it whole"; he has found a fast anchorage, a reasonable faith, a sober hope, an understanding love of his fellows.

Of the other poets I will content myself with little more than a list of names. On a rather lower level than the supreme trio stand Coleridge¹ and Byron. Coleridge fares rather hardly, for his greatest and most consecutive poem, *The Ancient Mariner*, was considered too long for inclusion. Byron's lyrics, mostly tragic love songs, have a real charm, but they seem trite and superficial beside the best of Shelley's. On a lower level again come Scott, Southey, Campbell, and Moore, poets whose reputation was far greater in their own day than now. Campbell, however, despite his feeble treatment of the themes glorified by his greater brethren, rises to a very high level in *Ye Mariners of England*, which even Palgrave must admit to be not unconnected with the "follies and wars" of the time.

CCVIII.

BLAKE: TO THE MUSES. Blake writing in the 1780's and Collins in the 1740's (141. clxxviii.) seem both to have felt that English poetry had fallen on evil days; and so on the whole it had, in a way I have tried to explain in my introduction to Book Third. When Blake wrote thus the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge, which may be taken as marking the beginning of that unparalleled outburst of lyric poetry to which Book Fourth is devoted, was still fifteen years distant. But Blake himself had anticipated much that was most characteristic of the movement.

¹ Coleridge, that is to say, as represented in *The Golden Treasury*. I do not wish to be taken as denying that *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* are among the greatest poems in the language.

166. CCX.

KEATS: ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER. Keats, the most Elizabethan of the Romantics, usually follows Shakespeare in the arrangement of the "idea" of his sonnets, though he does not here return to Shakespeare's rhyming system. We have a single "idea" expressed in the first eight lines. It is illustrated by two similes. The sonnet is one of the finest in the language, and certainly the vividest description of a certain kind of intense delight, the delight of possessing something long looked forward to. From this point of view, observe the amazing aptness of the similes: (1) The existence and even the position of the "new planet" (Uranus) was scientifically deduced before Herschel in 1781 fixed his telescope on a point it was expected to cross, and saw it come! This I always think must have been one of the finest excitements in the whole history of scientific research. The outermost planet (Neptune) was discovered in the same way after Keats' death. (2) Mariners had already expected to find a Pacific Ocean—that is to say, they had already come to the conclusion that the new "Indies," as they called America, could not be the old "Indies" off Southern Asia—before Cortez (it was really Balboa) saw it from Darien (Panama). The finest part of the sonnet is, as it always should be, the end. Picture the scene described in the last three lines. The leader "*staring*" out to sea; the rest "*looking at each other with a wild surmise*": all "*silent*" and "*upon a peak in Darien.*" The mere quiet beauty of the word Darien no doubt appealed to Keats. Substitute Panama, and much is lost besides the rhyme. Chapman's *Homer* is an Elizabethan translation, rather fantastic and not the best for the modern reader, who will get more of the spirit of Homer from the antique prose of Andrew Lang

and his collaborators. I add, as an interesting parallel, Lang's sonnet on *The Odyssey* :

“ As one that for a weary space has lain
 Lull'd by the song of Circe and her wine
 In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
 Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
 And only the low lutes of love complain,
 And only shadows of wan lovers pine—
 As such an one were glad to know the brine
 Salt on his lips, and the large air again—
 So gladly from the songs of modern speech
 Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
 Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
 And through the music of the languid hours
 They hear like Ocean on a western beach
 The surge and thunder of the *Odyssey*.”

167. CCIX.

KEATS : ODE ON THE POETS. I would group this poem with two others (229 and 270. cclxxii. and cccxviii.) very similar in style. All are exquisite examples of what I would call Keats' "lighter manner." All are in the same metre : each treats a fanciful idea, and each returns in its last lines to an echo of the opening. Of the three, this *Ode on the Poets* has the most of serious meaning, and among *Bards of Passion and of Mirth* we may well suppose that Keats was thinking principally of his beloved Elizabethans.

168. CCXI.

COLERIDGE : LOVE. If Keats, among the poets of this book, draws most on the Elizabethans, Coleridge draws most on all that was most romantic in the spirit of mediæval chivalry. In this poem the Knight wins the Lady by singing her the tale of another lover. Many of the verses are most beautiful, but I feel that the stanza with its short fourth line is better suited to a shorter poem.

169. CCXII.

BYRON: ALL FOR LOVE. As often with Byron's lyrics, the charm seems largely due to the ease with which the whole thing seems to be done. And it was done easily: few poets ever wrote more rapidly and, indeed, carelessly—"stans pede in uno," as Horace says of a facile predecessor. Line 14 is a stroke of genius, but the last line is very poor stuff.

170. CCXIII.

SCOTT: THE OUTLAW. I shall not comment on most of the ballads of Scott, Campbell, and others in Book Fourth. I could say nothing that would make them easier reading than they are already, and many of them are not worth very much. They have not the spontaneity of the ballads of an earlier and ruder age.

172. CCXV. 173. CCXVI.

SHELLEY: LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR. BYRON: SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY. Both are intense and romantic expressions of passionate love. But while Shelley unburdens the heart of the lover, Byron describes the charms of the loved one. There is no doubt that Shelley's is far the finer poem; indeed, for simple intensity of passion I cannot think of its equal in English. The mysterious tropical setting, the stifling, scent-laden atmosphere, all help to produce the effect. By the side of it Byron's verses sink to mere prettiness, but they are very pretty. There is but one word in Shelley's poem I would wish away, the odd word "champak." Shelley produces his tropical effect well enough without this crude importation of tropical goods.

174. CCXVII.

WORDSWORTH: SHE WAS A PHANTOM. The first verse might suggest that we have here another lyric like Byron's above. But we have very much more, for Wordsworth excelled where Byron was weakest, in

constructive poetic thought. Each verse represents a different stage in the course of love. Verse one describes the first intoxicating impression; verse two, the stage of "courtship," perhaps, when character begins to be grasped and love deepens as it finds itself in accord with wisdom; verse three, the deepest love of all, the love of man and wife, serenely founded on complete understanding, yet with all the glamour of the first impression still vivid. Wordsworth was the most daring of poets in that he always said exactly what he felt, even when, by convention, it might seem unpoetical. Thus to some readers line 2 of the last verse may come as rather a shock on first reading—not because of the mixed metaphor; only pedants shy at mixed metaphors and are aghast when Hamlet contemplates taking "up arms against a sea of troubles"—but because it is generally odd to describe one's wife as a "machine." But the shock will wear off as the poem grows familiar, and this shows that underneath the apparent oddity lies, in this context, a real aptness. Phantom, woman, and machine are in fact the key-words of the three verses.

177-180. CCXX-CCXXIII.

WORDSWORTH: LUCY. A single series, written round a peasant child. The Dove is not that of Derbyshire, but a little beck near Kirkstone in the Lake District. In verse two of the first poem I feel that the first simile perfectly expresses Wordsworth's idea, the idea of humble and minute simplicity and beauty; but the second simile is conventional; it emphasises the beauty, but we feel that the violet has been a better symbol than the star for such beauty as Lucy's. The last two poems are a wonderful conception of the child's death. Nature loves her so dearly that she can no longer allow her a separate existence, but takes her to and incorporates

her with herself. Great nature poetry generally inclines towards pantheism, the form of religion in which God loses personality and is merged in his works which thereby become themselves the object of worship. In Shelley, but not in Wordsworth, pantheism was consciously and aggressively anti-Christian. In *Adonais*, Shelley's elegy on Keats, the poet's immortality is thus described :

“ He is made one with Nature : there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird ;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely ; he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling
there
All new successions to the forms they wear ;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's
light.”

As with *Adonais*, so with *Lucy*—

“ Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees.”

But the difference between Wordsworth's lines and Shelley's is more than a matter of diction, more

than a difference between soaring magnificence and homely simplicity. Adonais in dying enters into a fuller life: his voice is heard, his presence is felt, he bears his part in the fecund energies of Nature. But Lucy lies without motion, without force, "rolled round." After the lavish promises of Nature in the previous poem, there is something strangely bleak about the lines describing their fulfilment. And that is perhaps why we are not more of us pantheists.

183.

CAMPBELL: FREEDOM AND LOVE. Poor stuff, which Palgrave did well to cut out in his last edition: he might have cut out more by the same author. Campbell made spirited contributions to our "war poetry," but that is all he need be remembered by now.

188. CCXXXII.

SHELLEY: TO THE NIGHT. A wonderful expression of a lover's impatience—for so I take the poem. The day is this lover's time of weariness and ennui; he sighs for the magic hours of darkness. Shelley's imagery is so vivid and distinct that he may almost be said to create new "myths" around the subjects of his song, the Moon (264. cccxii.), the West Wind (275. cccxxii.) and the Cloud. The picture here, for instance, of night wiling away the day in a "misty eastern cave," weaving "dreams of joy and fear," is as distinct as any Greek tale of Aurora and Tithonus, and it has the advantage perhaps of being much less anthropomorphic.

189. CCXXXIII.

WORDSWORTH: TO A DISTANT FRIEND. As Wordsworth wrote so many sonnets of absolutely first-rate quality, it was an error, I think, on Palgrave's part to place earliest in his selection this rather uninteresting specimen. At one point alone is it really beautiful, and that in Wordsworth's most

characteristic manner—namely, the simile (lines 9-11) of the forsaken bird's nest filled with snow. This is perfectly appropriate, entirely original, and could only have occurred to a poet who had a genius for sympathy with wild nature.

190. CCXXXIV.

BYRON: WHEN WE TWO PARTED. A charming song, rather of the "drawing-room ballad" order. Two points are worth noticing: in lines 1 and 3 of the last verse the last "syllable" of the metre is dropped, and this intensifies the impression of flat despondency: again, the last line re-echoes the very beginning of the poem, and suggests that we've "got no further," as they say—that this human problem is capable of no happy solution.

191. CCXXXV.

KEATS: HAPPY INSENSIBILITY. This weak lyric was hardly worth inclusion, but as it is here, notice the oddity of its rhyming system. The last lines of the three verses rhyme with each other, but with nothing within the verses they severally end. The scheme seems to me a bad one. At the end of verse one, the unexpected "prime" makes us feel that "someone has blundered," a feeling which lasts till the end of verse two when "time" settles our minds on that point, no doubt, but hardly satisfies our ears.

193. CCXXXVII.

KEATS: LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI. One of the great "fairy" poems of the language. Compare the opening verse with the opening verse of Coleridge's *Love* (168. ccxi.). The metres are almost the same, but how utterly different are the rhythms, the music that the two poets make of them. Coleridge's verse is rather heavy and formal, and, as I said above, we tire of his short last line some time before the end of his poem. Keats' verse has a strange and elfin lilt,

which he carries consistently almost through the poem, and which gives to it a character all its own. How the trick is done, no one can fully explain; probably Keats could not himself; but the peculiar swing of the three-syllable words ending the early lines—"knight-at-arms," "loitering," "knight-at-arms," "woe-begone"—seems to set going a fascinating cadence which persists through the poem.

195. CCXXXIX.

SHELLEY: THE FLIGHT OF LOVE. Shelley had the art of expressing mere flat despondency, in itself the most unprofitable of mental conditions, with such grace and beauty that all trace of the morbid or the mawkish seems to disappear. Even so, this can hardly be called "edifying." The *Stanzas written in Dejection* (227. cclxx.) are tuned to the same key, but the result is a far finer poem.

198. CCXLII.

KEATS: BRIGHT STAR. Generally known as "Keats's last sonnet"; it is a magnificent piece of writing. Some delight in and some are slightly repelled by the frank materialism of lines 10-12. But there can surely be no two opinions about lines 5 and 6, which say an old thing in a wholly new and most beautiful way. The metaphor would to me suggest Wordsworth rather than Keats. Cf. 261. cccix., line 2.

199. CCXLIII.

KEATS: WHEN I HAVE FEARS. A still finer sonnet, and one that seems to strike a more personal note than most of Keats' poetry. For this reason, possibly, he did not include it in any volume published in his life time, though it was written three years before his death. Consumption was already striking down his youngest brother, and it seems that he already foresaw a like fate as his own. He was only twenty-

two, and yet, so it seemed, but little time would lie before him to decipher those "huge cloudy symbols of a high romance." None the less, when the mood of despair came over him, he could so brace his mind that he rose above it all—"Till life and fame to nothingness do sink." I have rejected Palgrave's title as false to the stoical spirit of these last two lines.

200. CCXLIV.

WORDSWORTH: DESIDERIA. This sonnet seems just to lack that beauty of language needed to convey to the heart (as well as the intelligence) of the reader the deep feeling with which it was obviously written.

202. CCXLVI.

BYRON: ELEGY ON THYRZA. A beautiful, simple poem of mourning, and the consoling thoughts with which the mourner tries to assuage his grief. It maintains a higher level throughout than the other Byron lyrics in this book.

203. CCXLVII.

SHELLEY: ONE WORD IS TOO OFTEN PROFANED. Palgrave with his love of fancy titles might have called this lovely song "True Love's Humility." I feel the last two lines are a trifle weak, especially as coming after the charming similes of the preceding couplet.

206. CCL.

CAMPBELL: YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND. This seems to me a really magnificent expression of national pride in the best sense, wholly free from the jingo bombast of *Rule, Britannia* (122. clviii.). Its only worthy companion is Kipling's *Recessional*, which strikes a deeper note perhaps, but is less wholly happy in phrase.

207. CCLI.

CAMPBELL: THE BATTLE OF THE BALTIC. A good, cheery battle piece, but on a much lower level than the last. Verse four represents very cleverly the transition from the feverish excitement of cannonade

to the pitiful emotions evoked by the woes of the defeated foe. But verse five cheers us up with the hearty generosity of the victor. "So they all lived happy ever after!"—unfortunately they *didn't*. Six years later the whirligig of Napoleonic warfare brought the British fleet again to Copenhagen. The town was bombarded and the Danish fleet surrendered. Writing of this in 1822, Campbell says:

"This attack, I allow, was a scandalous matter,
I gave it my curse and I wrote on't a satire.
To bepraise such an action of sin and of sorrow
I'll be damned if I would be the Laureate to-
morrow."

In this matter Campbell's political judgment was as worthless as these doggerel lines.

208. CCLII.

WORDSWORTH: ODE TO DUTY. A very fine poem, rather austere as fits its subject. The stanza is that of Gray's *Hymn to Adversity* (159. cci.). Wordsworth here gives proof of his faith in the "holiness" of childhood, a faith fully expounded in his other great ode (287. cccxxxviii.). Some, says Wordsworth here, are so happily constituted that they do right of native impulse. For the rest of us, Duty must be master. The poet, fatigued of being his own master, turns to Duty to guide him; and Duty is not something harsh and forbidding after all. The last verse but one is magnificent, especially the last two lines of it.

209. CCLIII.

BYRON: ON THE CASTLE OF CHILLON. Notice how the whole of this fine sonnet leads up to the magnificent epigram of the last line. It curiously catches the tone of the great political sonnets of Wordsworth, whom Byron affected to despise. But

Byron was not above imitating Wordsworth for all that:

“ I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me ; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture.”

Any ordinary reader would probably be prepared to bet heavily that these lines came from Wordsworth. He would in a sense be right in doing so, but he would lose his bet, for they come from *Childe Harold*.

210-214. CCLIV.-CCLVIII.

WORDSWORTH : POLITICAL SONNETS. Wordsworth grouped these and others as *Sonnets dedicated to National Liberty and Independence*, and they make the noblest contribution, not excluding Milton's, of English literature to European politics.

210. CCLIV.

ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND. At the time when Bonaparte made Switzerland a virtual dependency of France (1802) England and France were at peace. But no one expected much of the Treaty of Amiens, and the threat of invasion was already foreseen.

211. CCLV.

THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC. Partitioned by France and Austria in 1797. Notice the honesty of Wordsworth. He will not pretend that Venice was still great and glorious at the time of her fall.

212. CCLVI.

LONDON. Wordsworth could never bring himself to like towns and town life. The most magnificent expression of this antipathy may be found in another sonnet (278. cccxxvi.). The only time Wordsworth really relented towards London was when he saw it “asleep” in a midsummer dawn (245. ccxci.). The

present sonnet just verges on "sermonese," if I may coin a word on the analogy of journalese.

213. CCLVII.

MILTON. Lines 9-11 are perhaps the most splendid tribute that one English poet ever paid to another. Notice, by the way, how similar in structure many of Wordsworth's sonnets are to Milton's (*cf.* 64. lxxxvii.). It must be admitted that this sonnet "tails off" a little in the last three lines; and for a sonnet, as for a speech (and, for aught I know, all human undertakings), the end is the most important part.

214. CCLVIII.

WHEN I HAVE BORNE. A very interesting sonnet to us living in the midst of our own Great War. Many lesser men since Wordsworth felt and expressed somewhat "unfilial fears" as to their country, its modern character and destiny. Many of them now are, as Wordsworth was, "in the bottom of their heart ashamed" when they see what their country stands for in the world. This sonnet, though less splendid than the last for the most part, achieves a truly happy ending.

215. CCLIX.

CAMPBELL. HOHENLINDEN. A rather second-rate affair; both the glory and the horror of war are very superficially delineated. Surely "furious Frank and fiery Hun" is highly ridiculous; of course the latter word had not then gained its offensive connotation, and is simply "short for" Hungarian. I presume all the final lines of the stanzas are meant to rhyme: if so, what about "sepulchre."

216. CCLX.

SOUTHEY: AFTER BLENHEIM. A pleasant little "pacifist" poem by the author of *The Life of Nelson*. After all, the battle of Blenheim dealt a blow to the militarist schemes of Louis XIV. for the de-

struction of European liberties exactly similar to the blow dealt to the aims of Germany by the battle of the Marne, so that old Kaspar's inability to answer little Peterkin's question in the last verse throws more light on old Kaspar's (and presumably Southey's) knowledge of history than on the utility of war.¹

217. CCLXI.

MOORE: PRO PATRIA MORI. A comment on one of Moore's lyrics will suffice as a comment on them all. Moore was an elegant and facile writer of delightful songs. He says, or rather sings, quite delightfully what he has to say, or sing; and that is always something commonplace. His verse is well worth reading, but it does not stand the further test; it is not worth talking or writing about.

218. CCLXII.

WOLFE: BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE. This poem is perfect. That is to say, it is perfectly adequate to its subject, the hasty but reverent burial of a very great soldier. It breathes the very spirit of the occasion, and in this way contrasts with 207 and 215, ccli. and cclix., in which a poet embroiders upon a theme he has got up from the newspapers. One would think it was "trench poetry." As a matter of fact, Wolfe was a young Irish clergyman

¹ As a reviewer has pointed out, this note may be entirely misconceived. The ignorance of the importance of Blenheim may be Kaspar's only and not Southey's. Kaspar is very proud of the local battle and all the devastation it wrought, but it has never occurred to him to wonder what good, if any, "came of it at last." History is often enough, one fears, taught in that spirit to-day. A victory is "glorious" irrespective of cause or result. True, there will be glory always for the brave men who fight, whether winners or losers, but for their governments, whether losers or winners, very often not true glory but its opposite. The reader is left to choose between the two interpretations of the poem.

and wrote the poem seven years after Moore's death. He died aged thirty-two, and would be entirely unknown now but for this one poem. Palgrave gives another sample in his last edition (cclxxvii.), which is pretty but unremarkable. The note thereon rather absurdly compares him with Keats, whom he only resembled in his death by consumption.

219. CCLXIII.

WORDSWORTH: SIMON LEE. Wordsworth wrote a good many ballads of this sort, in a rather propagandist spirit. For he held that the custom of devoting ballads exclusively to deeds of war and violence was a barbaric superstition, and that the simplest characters, the quietest scenes, and the gentlest emotions, treated in the bald language of everyday life, were true material for poetry. Indeed he went further and held that such poetry was specially needed in an age like his own, drugged with the excitement of wars and revolutions, and ever setting its face, under the influence of the rising industrialism, from country towards town. To discuss the value of his theory would demand a full-length essay. I will only point out that his determination to adhere to the language of everyday life led him into one curious inconsistency. He forgot that, to imitate such language, it would be necessary not only to use common words, but also to use them in their common order. All his poems of this type are somewhat marred by inversions such as that in the first line of verse three.

223. CCLXVII.

WORDSWORTH: A LESSON. This with the three preceding and the two following poems makes a group treating of the pathos of growing old. Each poem is very characteristic of its author. Wordsworth takes a parable from nature. Lines

14-16 charmingly express the tiny tragedy of the tiny life of the flower. Notice Wordsworth's quaint conscientiousness in the naming of the flower. I am no botanist, but am prepared to assume, till corrected, that the *greater* celandine behaves in some manner mysteriously different.

226.

SHELLEY: INVOCATION. This is Shelley at his simplest. It is hard to justify Palgrave's later omission of the poem. Notice the list of things Shelley loves, in verse six. Both Shelley and Wordsworth drew their best inspiration from nature, but with Wordsworth it is usually nature in her homelier and humaner aspects, while with Shelley it is the wild and elemental things. His greatest nature poems are an *Ode to the West Wind* (275. cccxxii.) and *The Cloud*. Even when both poets treat of the same subject, they draw wholly different ideas from it, as in the two poems on the skylark (240, 241. cclxxxvi., cclxxxvii.). Readers of contemporary poetry may remember a poem of Rupert Brooke, *The Great Lover*, in which he gives a far more comprehensive catalogue of the things he loves than Shelley does here.

227. CCLXX.

SHELLEY: STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES. I have already referred to this poem (188. ccxxxii.), and here need only call attention to the beauty of the last verse. Scenery such as that of the Bay of Naples on a dazzlingly fine day can provoke melancholy by its almost intolerable excess of beauty.

228. CCLXXI.

SOUTHEY: THE SCHOLAR. Except for Blenheim (216. cclx.), this is the only specimen of Southey, a learned and virtuous man, and an excellent biographer, who enjoyed among his contemporaries a reputation as a poet, at which we can only wonder. Here he is at his best—a quiet, neat, and dignified

expression of a scholar's delight in his well-stocked library. I fear he may have expected, however, to leave a greater "name" than he has left.

230-238. CCLXXIII.-CCLXXXIV.

BY VARIOUS POETS: POEMS OF EARLY DEATH. Scott's *Proud Maisie* is a wonderful little "fairy" poem. The touch of magic relieves it of all morbidness, and even of all cruelty. Hood's *Bridge of Sighs* is, however, distinctly morbid, simply because it fails to be as tragic as the author intended. If such a subject is to be treated at all, it should surely either be made more "awful" than this, or it should be treated as Browning treats it in *Apparent Failure*. Words fail me for describing the spirit of that singular poem, so I must content myself with referring the reader to it. Lamb's *Hester* is, I suppose, the best poem of the famous essayist. The girl is evidently a mere neighbour, often seen and slightly known, and the poem does not pretend to be more "tragic" than it really is. The rather quaint diction of the first four lines is delightful. Wordsworth's *Affliction of Margaret* is, to be exact, a poem of anxiety rather than of mourning. The last verse but one has the true Wordsworth ring—great poetry of the quietest sort, the sort furthest removed alike from rhetoric and from song.

240. CCLXXXVI. 241. CCLXXXVII.

WORDSWORTH: TO THE SKYLARK. SHELLEY: TO A SKYLARK. It is idle to inquire which is the better poem, but most interesting to observe how the two poets make the same subject the text for their quite dissimilar discourses. Wordsworth is almost afraid that the skylark, flying so high, is forgetful of its home upon the ground! But he reassures himself. He pictures it as ever in touch with its nest by means of the wireless telegraphy of song. He also praises it because, though it soars, it does

not roam, "true to the kindred points of Heaven and Home," as we all should be. Shelley, on the other hand, delights in the Skylark because it is free of earth altogether. It is gloriously invisible: its home is in the sky. Here the skylark pours forth its song, as spontaneously as the poet his verse, the maiden her love music, the glow-worm its light, and the rose its scent. In the latter part of the poem Shelley praises the skylark for its unlikeness to ourselves. Wordsworth praises it for its likeness to what is best in us.

242, 243. CCLXXXVIII. CCLXXXIX.

WORDSWORTH: THE GREEN LINNET THE CUCKOO. These two poems illustrate very well two types of nature poetry. *The Green Linnet* is "nature pure and simple," a charmingly detailed study of the linnet in spring from the point of view of the poet-naturalist sitting idly in his garden. *The Cuckoo*, on the other hand, is "nature, and a reflection." As he lies and listens, the poet-philosopher recalls his boyhood, when he sought so eagerly to find and see the bird he is now content to hear only. The "golden-time" of youth comes back, when the blithe cuckoo seemed a less incongruous element in life than it does in our dull maturity. Here again we anticipate the idea of the *Immortality Ode* (287. cccxxxviii.). The "reflective" element here, of course, is very slight, compared with the importance it assumes in, for instance, the two Skylark poems above.

244. CCXC.

KEATS: ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE. Perhaps the most elaborately and perfectly finished lyric in the language. One must read the poem very slowly even when one knows it well, if the close-packed riches of the language are to be enjoyed. Here we have a third type of nature poem. If we call *The*

Green Linnet "descriptive," and *The Cuckoo* and *The Skylark* "reflective," we might call this "meditative." For very little of the poem is occupied with describing anything Keats can actually see or hear of the nightingale or its surroundings, and the rest hardly presents a "philosophy," a view upon life, such as Wordsworth and Shelley gave us above. Keats neither observes, nor thinks: he dreams, and his dream is the poem, a marvellous series of pictures. The last two verses with their rapturous apostrophe of the nightingale, breaking down suddenly as the dream dissolves and the poet awakes to his "sole self"—these two verses are perfect. Notice how the word *forlorn* lies, like the last impression of our own dreams, midway between the dreaming and the waking. Such poetry as this cannot be explained or paraphrased. There is a story of an examiner who asked for a paraphrase of the last verse but one, and got a piece of prose opening: "The nightingale is not a game bird: sportsmen do not tread on it for food." But the fool was the examiner, not the candidate.

245. CCXCI.

WORDSWORTH: UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE. One of the loveliest sonnets. As I said elsewhere, this is, so far as I know, the only occasion when Wordsworth gives London unqualified praise: for it is asleep and harmless to annoy him! Most readers, I believe, if they tried to picture to themselves the genesis of this poem, would suppose that chance had led the poet to the bridge in the early hours of a summer morning; they would picture him pausing in his walk and leaning on the balustrade of the bridge, quietly absorbing the beauty of the scene, and possibly composing the sonnet as he stood. Had it been a less austere poet than Wordsworth, the reader might even fancy the occasion was the return

from some prolonged and festive evening out: but Wordsworth was not of that sort. Charles Lamb says somewhere: "Wordsworth's standard of intoxication was miserably low." But these were not the actual circumstances of the sonnet at all. Here is an extract from his sister's diary: "Left London between five and six o'clock of the morning, outside the Dover coach. A beautiful morning. The city, St Paul's, with the river, a multitude of little boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge; the houses not overhung with their clouds of smoke, were spread out endlessly; yet the sun shone so brightly with such a pure light, that there was something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles." So the sonnet was a snapshot, taken from the top of a coach! And yet not so exactly: Wordsworth says somewhere that the source of his poetry was "deep emotion recollected in tranquillity." By this poetic "memory" the poet set much store (*cf.* 240. ccxcvii).

246. CCXCIII.

SHELLEY: OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT. One of his few sonnets, and quite unique. The vanity of earthly power was a favourite subject of Shelley, who more than any other of the Romantics held the pure, fierce, and over-simple faith of the Girondins. The last three lines, indicating the vast blank spaces lying round the monstrous ruin, are wonderfully done. 249. CCXCVII. 250. CCXCVIII.

WORDSWORTH. THE HIGHLAND GIRL. THE REAPER. Each poem commemorates a "glimpse," a country girl seen by chance for a moment, and yet never forgotten. In each case Wordsworth passes on his way almost gladly, assured that, though the sight is gone for ever, he has won a permanent treasure of memory. And on the treasures of memory Wordsworth set great value (*cf.* 243, 253. cclxxxviii., ccci.).

The Highland Girl commemorates a picture; the appeal was to the eye. *The Reaper* commemorates the girl's song; it is no doubt the more perfect poem. At "O listen!" line 7, we feel the poet, who has hitherto been pursuing his walk, comes to a standstill, and throughout the next two verses he and the voice he hears are alone in a universe of their own. With the fourth verse the spell breaks, and the poet walks on, carrying the song in his heart. 253. CCCI.

WORDSWORTH: THE DAFFODILS. A pretty little piece of description, with the now familiar allusion to "memory." But the simile of the first line becomes more surprising the more one thinks of it. Wordsworth must have thought of himself as like a cloud, in his lonely, aimless wanderings over the fells, otherwise he would never have said so. He is the most autobiographical of poets. 255. CCCIII.

KEATS: ODE TO AUTUMN. A fine piece of gorgeous description, comparable with the *Nightingale Ode*, though by no means so thrilling. The accumulated "song of autumn" at the end is delightful. 260. CCCVIII.

SHELLEY: THE RECOLLECTION. A slight, but very pretty and dexterous piece on a subject that probably appeals to everybody. The last lovely day of a long lovely holiday *à deux* is over, and the poet cries with Hamlet: "My tables—meet it is I set it down." Before memory fades, the diary must be written up, to be a memento in duller days to come. The scene was a pine forest by the sea; the perfect stillness was the most wonderful part of it all; and then the reflection in the pool of the glories of pine wood and sky, softened and "interfused beneath with an Elysian glow." Last came a little "envious wind," and the water picture is gone. So is the

holiday. The poet's quaint mention of his own name at the end gives the whole an informal and intimate air, as befits a diary.

261. CCCIX.

WORDSWORTH: BY THE SEA. One of the best sonnets. The first eight lines paint the picture of calm, natural and spiritual, for the one is but the symbol of the other. Then the poet turns to the girl beside him, who seems not to care a rap for all this beauty. But he will not find that a fault in her. The child is still so near to heaven that she needs not to decipher its message in the beauty of earth. Once again, the idea only fully worked out in the *Immortality Ode* (287. cccxxxviii.).

264. CCCXII.

SHELLEY: TO THE MOON. A good example on its minute scale of Shelley's power of creating a new "myth": we shall meet examples on a larger scale in *The West Wind* (275. cccxxii.) and *The Cloud*.

CCCXVI.

COLERIDGE: KUBLA KHAN. This astonishing piece of melody is a fragment, and of course poets ought not to write fragments—at least of this quality. To discard a failure is well; to leave *Kubla Khan* in its present state showed that something was wrong with Coleridge the man, as in fact it was. Instead of crediting opium with what we have got of the poem, it is, I think, more sensible to debit to opium what we have not got.¹ The poem as it stands is a wonderful example of the sheer power of style. Take such lines as—

¹ I am told that the problem of the precise relationship between Coleridge's poetry and Coleridge's drug habit is a very difficult and delicate one. Certainly it cannot be discussed in these pages. I leave the above as written, but warn the reader that it is very likely nonsense.

“ A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover ! ”

or—

“ And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war ! ”

The *meaning* of the latter passage especially, taken in conjunction with anything else in the poem, is mere drivelling irrelevance. And yet the lines themselves echo and re-echo in our ears like a favourite phrase of Chopin.

271.

SHELLEY : HYMN TO THE SPIRIT OF NATURE. One of the greatest lyrics in the language. It is by no means easy to seize its purport, and quite impossible to translate it into prose. It occurs in the course of Shelley's great allegorical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*, and is sung by an invisible Spirit in the air. It represents an attempt to pierce to the Soul of that of which visible nature is the body ; and yet it is not so much a quest as the opposite, for the vision of such a Soul is too much for frail humanity. He dies, who sees God face to face. In fact this “ Spirit of Nature ” is what the religious call God, but Shelley called himself a pantheist and regarded God, at any rate the God of the churches, as a hateful invention. Such a God is, in fact, the villain of *Prometheus Unbound*.

272. CCCXIX.

WORDSWORTH : WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING. It seems a far cry from the abstract intensity of Shelley's hymn, above, to the gentle common-places, as they might seem, of this poem. But Palgrave evidently had a purpose in putting them together. When Wordsworth attributes to the very twigs a power of enjoying life he is spiritual-

ising Nature as unflinchingly as Shelley did above.

274. CCCXXI.

SHELLEY: WRITTEN IN THE EUGANEAN HILLS. A too rambling lyric, inspired by Shelley's first visit to Italy. The best part is the description of Venice in the third and fourth stanzas.

275. CCCXXII.

SHELLEY: ODE TO THE WEST WIND. The most elaborate, the most splendid, and the most vigorous of Shelley's nature poems. The stanzas are sonnets,¹ but Shelley so transfigures the familiar metre with the rushing mighty rhythm of his subject that we hardly recognise it. The poem is one of the finest examples of Shelley's "myth-making." The west wind, like the cloud and the moon in two other poems, becomes a living creature; not a human being or deity masquerading as west wind, as in conventional mythologies or bad poems such as 256. ccxiv., but a living creature of its own species, driving the leaves in its path, cleaving the Atlantic into chasms and singing the dirge of the dying year. In the last two verses Shelley turns to the Spirit of his own fashioning and prays, first, that it will blow him clear of this troublesome world, secondly, that it will inspire his music and sow his song broadcast. It is natural to compare the poem with Keats' *Ode*

¹ I am told that the stanzas are not sonnets but *terza rima* (third rhyme), the metre of Dante's great epic. The reader will observe that the rhymes do not group themselves in quartets in the first part of the stanza and trios in the latter, after the manner of a sonnet, but in a system of interlocking trios throughout, until the final couplet; the pattern may be set out as aba, bcb, cdc, ded, ee. None the less, the final couplet, which is no part of the traditional *terza rima*, brings the number of lines up to fourteen, and this fact, taken with the fact that the lines are five-foot iambic lines, justifies me in calling the stanza at least a "kind of sonnet."

to a *Nightingale*, for the two stand together as the most highly wrought of the "nature" poems of Book Fourth. I will not recapitulate my classification of Keats as meditative, and Shelley as reflective. I would rather call attention to the difference of subject. Shelley's poem seems to have much more fire about it. The fact is, it has much more *wind* about it, for its very subject is motion, while Keats' subject is the stillest thing in nature. Thus Shelley's stanzas read more rapidly than any other sonnets in the language, while Keats' lines linger and pause like the notes of the nightingale's song.

SHELLEY: THE CLOUD. I know not what strange freak caused the permanent exclusion from *The Golden Treasury* of this splendid and familiar poem. This seems the natural place to insert it. The "myth" here is more detailed than that of *The West Wind*; the whole poem moves more rapidly; and the poet himself and his own longings appear not at all. Indeed it might be called, like Wordsworth's *Green Linnet* (242. cclxxxviii.), a poem of "nature pure and simple," a descriptive poem. But the eye of the observer is the eye of fancy, and his vision is become a myth. Each stanza describes an aspect of the cloud's "life." The bewildering and ingenious beauty of the "moon" stanza, the fourth, has never been equalled or even approached in its own kind.

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits ;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits ;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea ;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains ;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead ;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea
beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,

With wings folded I rest, on mine aery nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer ;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl ;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow ;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores,
I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare.
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex
gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the
tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

276. CCCXXIII.

WORDSWORTH: NATURE AND THE POET. Wordsworth's own title to this poem is *Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm*; it commemorates the death of his brother, who was drowned at sea. The poet stands before Beaumont's picture of the castle, passionately lashed by storm. He reflects how, years before, he had spent a month at Peele, a month of unbroken calm and sunshine. What a different picture he himself would have painted then! Yet it is the storm picture and not the sunny picture that is the truth. For life is a thing of storms, for those whom sorrow has taught to read with open eye the passionate records of humanity. The sunny picture is but an elegant fancy. The occasion of these musings is, of course, his brother's death; but, on a wider view, we may find therein a symbol of Wordsworth's spiritual progress as a whole. The careless buoyant delight in nature and the rose-coloured visions of human progress of his early years had been blasted once for all by the horrors into which the French Revolution, on which he had based so many hopes, had fallen. Then came disillusionment; from which, however, he rose again to a new hopefulness, wiser and sadder, less buoyant but more "human" than that of his early days. The

progress is traced in the beautiful *Lines written a few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, which is too long for insertion here. Verse four deserves a moment's attention.¹ The words to

“ . . . add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream,”

are often quoted as Wordsworth's account of the function of Art. For example, Mr Temple in *Mens Creatrix* (p. 42): “The true beauty is something greater than what most men see in mountain or sky; we do not see it, till the artist has thrown upon it ‘The light that never was (etc.) . . .’ But that light transfigures and transforms what it illuminates. It adds new values of its own.” This may be true enough; but Wordsworth says the artist must *not* “add” this “light that never was”; if he does, he departs from the truth.

278. CCCXXVI.

WORDSWORTH: “THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US.” I have praised many sonnets of Wordsworth, but this is the finest of all, a blazing protest against our Philistine commercial life, which puts us out of tune for all that really makes life worth living. Was ever simile more strangely beautiful than that of the seventh line? From the nominally Christian world of bank-book and ledger, he turns to the joyous paganism of the world of Homer. Compare Andrew Lang's sonnet on *The Odyssey* quoted under 166. ccx.

279. CCCXXVII.

WORDSWORTH: WITHIN KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE. It is not always the best lines in a poem that are the most familiar. Many have at the tips of their

¹ Cf. *Wordsworth*, by Sir W. Raleigh, p. 107.

tongues the rather trite morality of lines 6 and 7; but only the few remember, I expect, the magnificent description of architecture in the lines that follow.

CCCXXVIII.

KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN. Though the subject seems so different, this is a companion piece to the *Nightingale Ode*. In both poems Keats falls a-dreaming under the influence of an exceptional quietude, and the dream is the poem. What delights him is the eternal unreality of these pictured figures, "freed from anxiety and mischance. This seemed to him something better than our haphazard hand-to-mouth reality, as art seemed to him better than life; and he turns away from the present to the beautiful dumb-show of the past that he could watch from a distance, to lovers who did nothing but love, and for whom love was all a matter of passionate gestures."¹ Just so in the *Nightingale Ode* he yearns for a distant unreality in terms of space, for "the warm South."

281. CCCXXX. 282. CCCXXXI.

WORDSWORTH: TWO APRIL MORNINGS. THE FOUNTAIN. These are quite the best of Wordsworth's simple ballad poems, the idea of which I discussed under 219. cclxiii. Particularly charming are, I think, verses 8-11 in the second poem.

284. CCCXXXIII. 285. CCCXXXV.

KEATS: THE HUMAN SEASONS. SHELLEY: A LAMENT. Two very youthful poets on the sorrows of on-coming age. Shelley has made much the best of the subject. Keats' sonnet is almost tiresome in its symmetrical regularity, while Shelley's little outcry is passionate and splendid, and—surely obviously the work of a young man!

¹ Quoted from article on "The Promise of Keats" in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 18th Jan. 1917, the ablest appreciation of Keats that has come my way.

287. CCCXXXVIII.

WORDSWORTH: ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD. This may well be called the greatest poem of our Romantic movement. For that movement was essentially lyric and its long poems are great only by fragments; and among the lyrics this poem is wider in scope and deeper in idea than the masterpieces of Shelley and Keats and Coleridge. It is indeed nothing less than the "gospel of William Wordsworth," and as such I have frequently referred forward to it from poems in which that gospel is hinted at or assumed. I will first analyse the general drift of the thought and then call attention to some points of treatment.

Verses 1 and 2 (ll. 1-18). Wordsworth has lost something of his inspiration, or, to put it the other way, Nature has lost something of her glamour for him. Why?

Verses 3 and 4 (ll. 19-57). The cry of a shepherd-boy reawakens for a moment his sense of delight, but only for a moment. What has happened to him?

Verse 5 (ll. 58-76). Solution of the problem. Our inspiration is something we bring with us from Heaven when as children we leave it and come to Earth. As we grow up, the inspiration fades.

Verses 6-8 (ll. 77-128). Earth, our kindly Nurse (not our Mother, notice), beguiles us with her treasures, and the child eagerly devotes himself to these, instead of caring for the things of his true home that he has left behind.

Verse 9 (ll. 129-167). Yet, let us be thankful, something of the heavenly fire is left aglow. Wordsworth is grateful, not so much for the sheer joy it brings as for solemn moments of almost uncanny insight, when earthly things fall from around us and we see into the eternal verities once more.

Verses 10-11 (ll. 168-end). And this being so,

we need not turn from or scorn mere earthly nature; rather enter into its life, bringing with us the insight and sympathy that heaven, not earth, has endowed us with.

Notice how the variations of metre fit the varying moods of the poem. After the varied and broken rhythms of the first four verses in which the poet is describing his difficulty, the fifth verse states the solution with something of the regular and sombre cadences of a march. Perhaps the most splendid piece of poetry in the whole poem is the long stanza, beginning

“O joy! that in our embers”

and rising to the climax of the sea simile, and the majestic length of its final line. The quiet ending has the character, even though not quite the metre, of a sonnet. It is well to pause over the last two lines of all, and to realise—it requires an act of faith—that the fact there stated was an autobiographical truth. That will give a measure of the distance between Wordsworth and any pretty prattler in verse who may take nature for his theme. It is a pity that no poem in the book gives a quite adequate example of the experience that Wordsworth describes as

“obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.”

The reader in search of such an example should find for himself the poem called *The Leech-Gatherer*; or *Resolution and Independence*.

INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIONAL POEMS

WE here part company with Palgrave and his arrangement of poems in a "poetically effective order." The reader who regrets this will find ample compensation in the entertainment he may get in rearranging the poems in such an order for himself. For the purposes of this book there is a certain convenience in having the poems grouped mechanically under their authors' names. I have in most cases taken the opportunity of introducing each poet with a few general remarks before proceeding to his poetry, and have thus embodied in the notes material that would otherwise have come in this introductory essay. The poets themselves are arranged in chronological order based on the year of birth. All I will attempt here is a certain amount of "grouping."

The period covered is roughly the Victorian, but Landor and Peacock, the first two names of note, are men of the earlier time, who escaped Palgrave's net merely by the accident of longevity. Landor was the friend of Southey and Peacock of Shelley. Yet even so their poems would be hardly at home in Book Fourth; for Landor was first and foremost a scholar, and his inspiration comes from the classics of Greece rather than from the Romantic movement that was going on around him; and Peacock—well, Peacock was an original. Other poets who fall outside what is properly Victorian are the three Americans: Emerson, Longfellow, and Whitman.

But of these only Whitman is American in the exclusive sense that he is also un-English.

It is natural to group Victorians as "early" and "late" Victorians, but Tennyson and Browning fill the whole period with their prolific output. Each began publishing before the Queen's accession, and with them old age brought no such decay of poetic energy as had afflicted Wordsworth. Browning on his death-bed, in 1889, received the news of the publication of his last volume, and Tennyson's last was still to come. Apart from these two, the most conspicuous among the Early Victorians are Mrs Browning, Clough, and Arnold. Mrs Browning's work is now much too completely forgotten, and her immortality is rather that of one who inspired great poetry in another, her husband's *Prospice* (399), for instance, his *One Word More*, and a lovely passage from *The Ring and the Book*, beginning :

" O lyric love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire."

In this collection she is represented by some of her own love-sonnets. Clough and Arnold are names as readily linked in the mind as those of Gray and Collins. They were friends: both were scholars: both were in revolt against the rising tide of industrialism, which yet fascinated them, so that they were unable to ignore it.

But when we pass to the "late Victorians," the most prominent group, the "Æsthetics"—Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne—have, as Arnold's Scholar Gipsy did, and as Arnold himself could never do, cut themselves, as poets, quite adrift from sordid bustling realities around them. In them the spirit of Coleridge, eager after a "light that never was on sea or land," has for the time quite overshadowed the spirit of Wordsworth, resolute to base poetry on

life's apparent commonplaces, as in Arnold and Clough it was based. One great name I have omitted, that of the translator of *Omar Khayyám*. In date FitzGerald belongs to the Early Victorians: he was born in the same year as Tennyson, 1809, several years before Browning and Arnold, and the first edition of his *Omar* appeared in 1859. But the great vogue of the poem was late Victorian, and in spirit it is clearly akin to Swinburne and his group of late Romantics, rather than to any of the earlier poets.
289-294.

LANDOR is in no sense a Victorian poet. Rather, he is one of the lesser Romantics, whom Palgrave was unable to include by reason of the accidental fact that he lived to the age of eighty-nine, dying three years after the publication of *The Golden Treasury*. In fact, he was born twenty years before Keats, and his first volume of verse, appearing in the year of Keats' birth, anticipated *Lyrical Ballads* by three years. Landor was a great classical scholar and his best verses are epigrams in the classical style, such as 289, 290, 293, 294. Of these the first is far the best, a magnificent expression of a truly Greek serenity. *The Maid's Lament* (292) with its close-packed antitheses seems to me an uninspired poem. The sonnet *To Robert Browning* is very pedestrian verse, and very obvious criticism. "Browning was a keen observer of character; a master of many styles: preferred Italian subjects." How very interesting!

297-299.

PEACOCK, another who escaped Palgrave only by reason of his longevity, was a man of baffling versatility. His best energies were devoted to the writing of highly ironic novels and to the service of the East India Company. His ambitious poetry is rubbish. But the three little specimens here

succeed very well in what they set out to do. 297 is, of course, a parody of the primitive ballad of martial exploit, popularised by Percy's *Reliques*, published near the end of the eighteenth century. 299 is spoilt, as it seems to me, by the lack of sufficient contrast between the rhymes in the first and third verses. "Ade" and "ave," "ed" and "et" are so similar that we get a disagreeable suggestion of all four lines rhyming together. This is a pity, for in all other respects the little love lament has an Elizabethan neatness and grace. 300, 301.

MACAULAY. When he wrote history in prose, all Macaulay's sympathies were with the Roundheads against the Cavaliers, and the Whigs against the Jacobites. But his best poem (300) is a touching tribute to the lost cause of the Stuarts. *The Battle of Naseby* (301) gives a vivid picture of the tactics of Naseby from the standpoint of a Puritan sergeant, presumably in the centre of the Roundhead army. In that battle the cavalry of each right wing, Rupert on one side and Cromwell on the other, carried all before it. But whereas Rupert's raced in wild pursuit from the field, Cromwell's better disciplined Ironsides halted and wheeled to the left, fell on the rear of the Royalist centre, and decided the day.

302, 303.

BARNES is a sort of Dorsetshire Burns, with less fire and less fancy, but a true humour and pathos of his own. 302 illustrates the first and 303 the second of these qualities.

304.

MANGAN, an Irish Catholic poet, one of the most gifted forerunners of the modern Irish school. This ballad is autobiographical, as might easily be guessed from its vehement and effusive sincerity.

His father was a grocer, and seems to have been a fool and a beast as well (verse 3); from the age of fifteen onwards he toiled for ten years in a lawyer's copying-office, to win a bare support for himself and his parents (verse 7?); he was unhappy in love (verse 8). Maginn was another Irish poet and journalist somewhat his senior, brought low by his own bad habits, and depicted, apparently, by Thackeray in *Pendennis* as Captain Shandon.

305, 306.

EMERSON was the "prophet" of old-fashioned intellectual Boston, and the friend of many great Victorians in England, notably Carlyle. His fame rests more on his essays, with their epigrammatic expression of a rather vague philosophic optimism than on his poems. *Brahma* (305) is a striking statement of Hindu pantheism. Brahma is the divine essence of all things, the universal self-existent soul, worship of which is the idea of the philosophic Brahminism that superseded the older polytheistic worship of the powers of nature—the "strong gods" and the "sacred seven" of the last verse. Properly speaking, Brahma is a neuter word meaning "prayer" or "the act of devotion"; the masculine form of the word means a worshipper. This explains the last line of the third verse. (I owe the material of this note to my friend Mr C. C. J. Webb's *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*. I am quite inexpert in this subject, but trust I have expressed his meaning correctly.)

307.

HAWKER'S TRELAWNEY. The hero of this poem was one of the famous Seven Bishops tried and acquitted in the crisis of James II.'s reign. I quote the following from Macaulay's *History*:—"The people of Cornwall, a fierce, bold, and athletic race, among whom there was a stronger provincial feeling than

in any other part of the realm were greatly moved by the danger of Trelawney, whom they revered less as a ruler of the Church than as the head of an honourable house, and the heir through twenty descents of ancestors who had been of great note before the Normans had set foot on English ground. All over the country the peasants chanted a ballad of which the burden is still remembered :

‘ And shall Trelawney die, and shall Trelawney die ?
There’s thirty thousand Cornish boys will know
the reason why.’

And the miners from their caverns re-echoed the song with a variation :

‘ Then twenty thousand underground will know the
reason why.’ ”

Hawker himself was a Cornish clergyman who found this refrain extant among his parishioners.

309, 314.

MRS BROWNING. It might seem that Wordsworth and Keats, in bringing the sonnet to its perfection, had exhausted it as a mine of wealth for later poets, much as Beethoven perfected and also, as it were, sterilised the classical sonata. Certainly Tennyson and Browning avoided the form almost completely, and it has only come to its own again to a limited extent, with Meredith and poets since Meredith. An exception to this rule is Mrs Browning, who used the sonnet form in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (which are *not* translations, as the title might imply) for the expression of her own experience of love. Thus she reverts to the Elizabethan sonnet motive, though not to the Elizabethan method. These five sonnets are all very beautiful and transparently “personal” in expression. The

idea of each is so simple that no introductions are required. The last sonnet achieves a splendid climax in its last line. *A Musical Instrument* (314) is one of those poems that appear a trifle commonplace until the last verse reveals that the whole is a charming allegory and sets us reading it afresh from the beginning with better appreciation.

315, 317.

LONGFELLOW at his best is a pleasant rather than a great poet. At his worst he wrote doggerel more complete and entire than any other writer who ever enjoyed a great reputation. Fortunately we do not sample this latter sort here. *The Slave's Dream* (315) is an Abolitionist poem, and it should be judged along with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* rather as a contribution to the forming of a sound public opinion in the States than as a contribution to art. *The Arsenal at Springfield* (316) similarly might be called a pacifist poem. The aptness of the opening simile will strike anyone who has ever entered an armoury. But lines 29-36 are a good example of a sort of metrical sermonese that is emphatically not poetry. *Children* (317) gives us Longfellow in a Wordsworthian mood, but it lacks that utter sincerity which gives a charm and also a certain air of mystery to even the baldest of Wordsworth's little ballads. Compare, for instance, the last verse but one with Wordsworth's

“One impulse from a vernal wood
Will teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.”

When Wordsworth says this, we feel that he has something real to say, even though we hardly know what it is, so paradoxical does it seem, but

Longfellow's much less extreme remarks strike us as a *façon de parler*.

319.

FITZGERALD: RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR. This is the "Gray's *Elegy*" of modern English poetry; it has enjoyed for the last thirty years a popularity which no single poem since Gray's *Elegy* can rival, and that popularity is based on the same grounds. Both are melodious and perfectly finished expressions of a mood so natural that every ordinary reader can "read himself into the poem" without conscious effort. Both say in words of force and beauty something we have had in our minds again and again, something that remained "mute and inglorious" for us till we found it in the poem. The mood here is: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. We know not whence we come nor whither we go; only that Life is a pleasant thing, if we take it kindly and make the best of it for ourselves and our fellows. As for the powers above, all seems blind Fate: if it is not, then the only God we know of is an Evil One (verses 57, 58). And yet—vanity of vanities! would that it could be otherwise! (verse 73)."

The poem purports to be a translation from the stanzas (*rubáiyát*) of the twelfth-century Persian poet. As Mr Chesterton remarks: "The work is too good to be a good translation." Perhaps it is one of those rare translations that both interpret and surpass their originals. I say they are rare, indeed I hardly know whether there be any such, unless some parts of our own Authorised Version. A good scholar and good critic once affirmed in my hearing that Professor Murray's versions of *Euripides* belonged to this class; but he would not like me to commit him by name to such an indiscretion. The *Rubáiyát* first appeared in 1859, and attracted but little

attention from any but a select public till Tennyson gave them an advertisement by dedicating a volume to FitzGerald's memory in 1885. From that date onward their vogue has surpassed that of any poem of Tennyson's. If the reader cares for a parallel, he may find one in the reputation of Samuel Butler of *Erewhon*, whose books moved in a very narrow circle for thirty years, till Mr Bernard Shaw called attention to him, some fifteen years ago, as an author even greater than himself. Thereupon the Butler vogue began. FitzGerald enlarged and improved his poem in each of the four editions that appeared in his lifetime. Here we have the first, for the same reason that we have also Palgrave's first edition of *The Golden Treasury*—namely, the copyright law. It is a pity, for the final version is greatly superior. It is, however, most interesting to compare the two, and seek out the reasons for the changes made.

It would be as tedious to comment in detail on this poem as on Gray's *Elegy*. I will not explain the many Persian names of the opening stanzas. The reader is not to be blamed if he finds these rather tiresome. Indeed the poem improves steadily from beginning to end. Verse 7 is perhaps the first of the really lovely verses, such as fill almost the whole of the latter part of the poem. As Mr Chesterton points out in his brilliant criticism (*The Victorian Age in Literature*, pp. 192-195), FitzGerald combines "something haunting and harmonious" that belongs to the Romantic movement, with "something compact and pregnant" that belongs to Pope and the eighteenth century. Verse 19 is an example of the former, and verse 58 of the latter. Indeed, for epigrammatic terseness it would be hard to find the equal of the last two words of verse 58 in any literature. The tragic passion

of verse 73 may always be quoted to refute virtuous people who talk of Omar as the poet of mere vinous indulgence.

322-335.

TENNYSON'S reputation has both dwindled and changed since mid-Victorian days when his fame was at its height. His long and ambitious works, *The Princess*, *In Memoriam*, and *The Idylls of the King*, were immensely admired, and he was popularly regarded as our greatest poet since Milton, as one who excelled Wordsworth by his superior polish and Shelley by his greater sobriety. Times have changed, and many find in Tennyson a matter for positive irritation; they point to the wearisomely long-drawn self-analysis of *In Memoriam*, and the stained-glass attitudes of *King Arthur*, and the self-satisfied piousness of *Sir Galahad* (324), and marvel at the strange tastes of their parents or grandparents. Yet Tennyson will live as a writer of the graceful and highly ornamented lyric, the heir of Keats and Coleridge, though he never rises to the level of the rich beauty of the *Ode to a Nightingale* or the wayward splendours of *Kubla Khan*. Those, like the present writer, who care little for *St Agnes' Eve* (323), less for *Sir Galahad* (324), and less still for the conventional prattling of *The Brook* (326), will yet delight in the romantic air of *The Splendour falls* (328), the solemn pathos of *Tears, Idle Tears* (329), and the quaintly charming love song, *O Swallow, Swallow* (330). If I might pick the line which seems to sum up all that is best in Tennyson, I would take one from 328: "The horns of Elfland faintly blowing." 332 is a fine piece of blank verse, quite in the style of Keats, especially of his *Ode to Autumn*. *Come into the Garden, Maud* (334), the central lyric of a long "monodrama" recording the tragic love affair of a rather Byronic young man, is a splendid expression

of passionate excitement. The description of dawn in the second verse is perfect. *In Love, if Love be Love* (335) with its famous simile of the "rift in the lute" is also a little gem. In fact the latter half of this little group of poems is as good as the first half is mediocre.

338-349.

BROWNING. One cannot yet apparently assert without fear of contradiction that Browning is our greatest poet since Wordsworth died. Nor can one assert without fear of contradiction that he is, as regards poetic interpretation of human nature, our greatest poet since Shakespeare. But I am firmly convinced that both statements are true. The present selection illustrates, but does not illustrate quite adequately, the immense range of Browning's sympathetic grasp of human character. Still, it is a far cry from the Renaissance *Grammarians* (346) to *Porphyria's Lover* (347), and from *Rabbi Ben Ezra* (348) to *A Woman's Last Word* (344). A different aspect of Browning's versatility is, however, illustrated well enough—his metrical versatility. Each poem, it will be noticed, is in an entirely different metre.

338.

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING is a song which plays the decisive part in the drama *Pippa Passes*, from which it is taken. Sung by a peasant child as she passes along the street to and from her work, it influences for good the various groups of characters in the drama when they hear it, and saves them from the ruin they are preparing for themselves.

340.

THE LOST LEADER. Much ingenuity has been wasted in trying to fit this imaginary character to some historical personage: poor Wordsworth has been the favourite victim, presumably because in old age he wrote Ecclesiastical sonnets and accepted the Poet

Laureateship. In the last four lines there is a touch of Browning's celebrated "obscurity," due always to his rapidity of thought and impatient desire to pack his lines with matter. "Best fight on well" means, "It is best that *he* (the lost leader) should fight on well—for the enemy, since he can no longer fight for us."

N.B.—Browning himself was more than half to blame for the identification of the "lost leader" with Wordsworth. Many years after the writing of the poem he gave the following answer to an inquiry on the subject. "I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerable personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the whole man, I should not have talked of 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' They never influenced the change of policy in the great poet; whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was, to my juvenile apprehension and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. Still, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as a 'vera effigies' of such a moral and intellectual superiority." (Incidentally, what an unpleasant prose style this is!) How far Browning has presented any essential features of Wordsworth's history at all must be left to the judgment of the reader who has read Wordsworth's life. For myself, I can see nothing in it. Wordsworth began as a friend of "the Revolution" and ended as its enemy, as did not Shelley and Byron. Further, he began as something like a Pantheist and ended something like an orthodox Anglican. Sadder still, he began as a great poet and ended a very mediocre

one, turning out quantities of well-forgotten verse, and even spoiling some of his inspired early work by tasteless revision. But the whole impression conveyed by "The Lost Leader," quite apart from "handfuls of silver," is something quite ludicrously different from this.

341, 342.

HOME THOUGHTS. Two splendidly simple poems; but the last line of each invites a word of comment, for different reasons. In the first poem—notice how the last line adds a vivid human touch. Up to this point, the poet figures as merely "abroad"; he might be in the moon for all we know, or on a Parisian boulevard. The last line places him—where the melon flowers grow, and he gives one of them an impatient kick to emphasise his longing for the buttercups. In the second poem—what a glaring false rhyme! Did Browning call the Dark Continent "Africay," or, having found six rhymes in "ay," were the resources of the rhyming dictionary exhausted? Wide acquaintance with Browning's sometimes quite infernal skill at rhyming will discourage the latter supposition. The false rhyme is, in fact, intentional. The exaltation of the poem fades as the poet turns to the dark mystery southwards, and the rhyme droops with the spirit of the poem.

344

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD is a flawless little poem, and a perfect reading of human nature, but 343 and 345 are by no means poems I should have selected myself for *The Golden Treasury*.

347.

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL. One of those great character studies, those "Men and Women," which constitute Browning's most original contribution to English poetry. The "grammarian" was one

of those Renaissance scholars whose enthusiasm for the glories of ancient Greece led him to bury himself in the study of the minutiae of Greek grammar. So he wore himself out at his crabbed task, and died in the midst of his beloved Greek particles. His students are carrying him to burial up in the mountains. What a wasted life! some would say: or if not wasted, what a tragedy! He died while building the road to his promised land, a road he was never to travel. Such was not the grammarian's view, nor Browning's.

“This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.” (Line 116.)

Yes!—but again :

“This throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.” (Line 124.)

In another world the grammarian will complete the edifice of which in this life he was content to lay the foundation.

347.

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER. One of those grim episodes in which Browning delighted. I always want to know “what happened next”; but this only Browning could have told. Notice the little description of Nature in an evil mood, which sets the tone of the poem in the first four lines. Browning excelled at this kind of thing, and gave his gift for it full scope in *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came*.

348.

RABBI BEN EZRA. This “apology for old age,” placed in the mouth of a Jewish rabbi, is one of the greatest of religious poems. But it is not altogether simple, and I offer a rough abstract of its line of thought.

Verse 1. Old age is not a thing to be dreaded: it is part of God's plan for us.

Verses 2-8. The extravagant hopes and searchings of youth should not be scorned. Only the brute creation is "perfect," in that its ends are completely realised; that youth's reach should exceed its grasp is the evidence of the divine element in us.

Verses 9-12. Just as in youth we delight to live and learn, yet never rest, so in old age we attain that rest, and, looking back, can give thanks.

Verses 13-19. Old age marks a pause in which we gather up results and make ready for the unknown adventure beyond the grave.

Verses 20-25. Only to old age is real certainty of God's existence vouchsafed. We see that human judgment, busying itself with external acts, goes hopelessly awry; only by what we meant to be, by "thoughts hardly to be packed into a narrow act," can we be truly judged, and for such a judgment God is needed.

Verses 26-32. Metaphor of the Divine Potter. Earth is the wheel; to it we are "bound dizzily," and shaped by the experiences of youth and age; but the *purpose* of the cup, all the while, is, when it is finished, "to slake God's thirst."

"My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!"

The grave music of this philosophic meditation rises to splendid heights in the last ten verses. The metaphor of the Potter is worked with great ingenuity and great daring. Verse 30 marks a splendid climax; in the last verses the sage turns from his tremendous vision to the quietly devotional mood of the first verse of the poem.

349.

PROSPICE ("Look forward"). One of the most dazzling lyrics in the language. The idea, "death but a fulfilment of life," is the same as that of *Rabbi Ben Ezra* and *A Grammarian's Funeral*. But the faith expounded in *Rabbi Ben Ezra* with philosophic calm is here poured forth with a passionate eloquence that sweeps all before it. In the last lines Browning pictures reunion with his beloved wife as the best thing Heaven will have to offer him.

352-354.

CLOUGH was one of the most brilliant pupils sent by Arnold of Rugby to Oxford, and his young contemporaries, among them Matthew Arnold and the future Archbishop Temple, deemed him certain to attain real greatness in whatever line he took up. But he died aged thirty-eight, after a life more full of perplexities than triumphs, leaving a slender volume of poetry, very personal in expression, and melancholy, as a rule, even when it is also humorous. His death is commemorated in Matthew Arnold's elegy *Thyrsis*, a poem worthy to be set beside *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, inferior to those great masterpieces though it be. Of the three poems here, the first *Qua Cursum Ventus* is a lament over the inevitable and unconscious estrangement of old friends, the second, *Say not the Struggle*, a protest against the apparent hopelessness of life, and the third, *Where lies the Land*, a picture of its apparent purposelessness.

356-359.

KINGSLEY was by no means a great poet, but he was a very fine type of English gentleman, a type easily made ridiculous, alas, by brief descriptions such as "sporting parson," or "muscular Christian." It is interesting, almost comical, to compare his *Ode to the North-East Wind* (358) with the ode of a greater poet to a wind that blows in nearly the opposite

direction (275). I should like to think his poem is a conscious protest against the ode of the "dangerous" Shelley. Kingsley's wind blows in briefer and more spasmodic gusts. Still, it is the wind that apparently has made England what she is: it is the wind that brought the Vikings: it is the "wind of God"—the God of the Old Testament, presumably.

360.

WHITMAN. This is the third American poet we have come to. But whereas Emerson and Longfellow belong to the old "colonial" culture that derives direct from England, and can be paralleled (very roughly, I admit) with our own Matthew Arnold and Tennyson respectively, Walt Whitman is wholly of the New World in a cultural as well as a geographical sense. Most of his poems, collected in *Leaves of Grass*, are as rhymeless and metreless as the Psalms, and even in *O Captain! My Captain!* it will be noticed that some of the rhyming is very faulty as judged by orthodox standards. The poem is a truly magnificent lament on the death of Abraham Lincoln, assassinated by a fanatic immediately after he had carried the American Civil War to a triumphant conclusion. The last two lines of the second verse have, to me, an extraordinary poignancy. In fact, the poem is worthy of its subject, and there could be no higher praise.

361, 362.

JEAN INGELOW. The only fitting comment on this most harmless poetess is Calverley's parody, in *Fly Leaves*:

"In moss pranked dells, which the sunbeams flatter,"
etc.

The best thing that can be told about the poetess is that she much appreciated the parody.

363-372.

MATTHEW ARNOLD. Arnold was disqualified by a certain lack of poetic fire from being one of the greatest poets, but he remains one of the most charming and interesting, by reason of the sincerity with which he expresses in his poetry his own lovable and interesting character. Much of that poetry is melancholy, like that of Clough, his friend at Rugby and Oxford. Yet it is the melancholy of a strenuous, though often baffled, seeker after truth, and has nothing morbid about it. After reaching middle age he ceased almost entirely to write poetry, and devoted himself to probing, by means of gravely humorous essays, those moral and intellectual diseases of society the contemplation of which, in earlier life, has infused a melancholy strain into his poetry.

363.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN is one of the few poems in which the personal touch of Arnold's own feelings is not obtruded. It is a charming fairy tale, but it just lacks in the telling that element of magic that Coleridge or Keats could have introduced. Perhaps the best verse is the third, with the description of deep-sea life: the "great whales" are quite worthy of the author of *The Ancient Mariner*.

364.

THE SONG OF CALLICLES, in its proper context, comes like a spray from a cool fountain after the fevers and the frets of the philosopher Empedocles, who finally casts himself into the crater of Mount Etna. After the final catastrophe, Calicles the harp-player is heard singing this song from the lower slopes of the mountain (from *Empedocles on Etna*).

365.

SHAKESPEARE. A good sonnet. The idea seems to be that Shakespeare is beyond our knowledge

now, because when alive he was above our weakness. He rose above our pains, weaknesses, and griefs; thus we cannot know him: but he can know us, and can, by his own victory over them, give those pains, griefs, and weaknesses their most perfect expression. This raises, of course, the old question of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Did he not therein express *his own* passions and weaknesses? Wordsworth says, "with this same key Shakespeare unlocked his heart"; to which Browning rejoins¹:

"Once more—

Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!"

366, 368.

A SUMMER NIGHT. THE FUTURE. Typical examples of Arnold's rather melancholy musings upon

"This strange disease of modern life
With its sick hurry and divided aims."

In the first Arnold contrasts the serenity of the moonlit sky with the feverish bustle of modern life, whether it be a life of dull mechanical duties or of wild disastrous adventure. In the second he compares life to a river whose upper reaches of the past were clean and pleasant, and whose lower reaches of the future may be broad and inspiring. For the present, however, the river of life is passing through its middle reaches, a dull and sordid flat, ringing with the din of industrialism.

367.

MORALITY. A magnificent poem in which Arnold rises above the depression of the two lying on either side of it. Never has the idea contained in "*Laborare est orare*" been more splendidly expressed.

¹ In the poem oddly called "House."

371.

THE SCHOLAR GIPSY. The facts about the hero of this poem are provided by the poet in his own introductory note, and this is just as well, for the poem is singularly vague in its references. The great charm of the first half of the poem lies in the description of the gentle and pretty country-side lying to the west of Oxford. The poem was written by an Oxford man for Oxford men, and those will enjoy it best to whom the place names call up definite associations and memories of old country walks. In the latter half of the poem we turn from the seventeenth-century truant to that "modern life" of which Arnold has already told us almost too much. Arnold delighted in "the scholar," much as Shelley delighted in the skylark, for his freedom from the things of earth, and the general arrangement of the two poems is similar (*cf.* 241). The long simile of the last two verses carries us far away from the scenes of the poem. This was a favourite device of Arnold's, and readers of *Sohrab and Rustum* will remember the marvellous concluding passage on the River Oxus, which performs a like office in that poem.

372.

RUGBY CHAPEL. For all its admirable sentiments this poem seems to me quite uninspired—except the truly beautiful first verse. I should like to detach that, and keep it as a poem by itself.

373-375.

CORY was an Eton master. In *Mimnermus in Church* (373) he states very charmingly "the case against Heaven"—that is, against the Heaven of our semi-official prospectuses in the Hymn-book and elsewhere. Readers of Rupert Brooke may call to mind his delightful poem *Tiare Tahiti*, in which he too compares unfavourably the next world with

this. But the heaven he depreciates is that pictured by Plato rather than that pictured by our hymnodists. *Heraclitus* (374) is a translation from the following verses of Callimachus:—

“Εἶπε τις, Ἡράκλειτε, τὸν μόρον ἐς δέ με δάκρυ
ἤγαγεν· ἐμνήσθην δ’ ὀσσάκις ἀμφότεροι
ἥλιον ἐν λέσχῃ κατεδύσαμεν. ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν πον,
ξείν’ Ἀλικαρνασσῆ, τετράπαλαι σποδιή.
αἱ δὲ τεαὶ ξώουσιν ἀηδόνες, ἦσιν ὁ παντῶν
ἀρπακτῆρ’ Αἴδος οὐκ ἐπὶ χεῖρα βαλεῖ.”

Those who can compare Cory's first verse with the Greek will be struck by the clumsiness and redundancy of the English version. But the difficulties with which a translator of Greek into English has to contend are insuperable. Greek can put so much into a single word, especially into a single verb. We, with our pronouns and auxiliaries, cannot imitate this. The case is worse when the verb is one for which no English equivalent can possibly be found, *κατεδύσαμεν*, for instance. There is an old story of an ignorant Bible teacher who, forgetting that St Paul did not write English, called attention to the Apostle's love of weighty monosyllables for the description of stern realities: "Thrice I fought with beasts in Ephesus." But what St Paul wrote was *τρὶς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐθριομάχησα*.

AMATURUS (375) might borrow an English title from Crashaw's poem (79), *Wishes for the Supposed Mistress*. Indeed they treat of the same subject, Crashaw in accordance with the elaborate conceits of his age, Cory in accordance with the terser and more sober style learnt by close communion with the Greeks. The antithesis of lines 11 and 12 I deem particularly happy.

376-377.

PATMORE. Even Palgrave's deliberate choice of "poetically effective order" could hardly have brought about a happier juxtaposition than that of Cory's *Amaturus* with *The Married Lover* (376) of Coventry Patmore, the author of *The Angel in the House*. We might fancy that Patmore represents 'Amaturus' grown older, with his highest hopes fulfilled. *The Toys* (377) is equally charming. Am I not right in thinking that the poetry of *fatherhood* is a much neglected field? ¹

379.

ROSSETTI, in poetry as in painting, was a mediævalist. In painting he and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites sought a return to the earlier manner of Italian Renaissance painting, with its clear outlines, minute details, and bright colouring, unblurred by the naturalist study of atmospheric effects. In poetry he loved to employ the bright pictorial images of mediæval religion. Chesterton says "he used the religious imagery (on the whole) irreligiously." And certainly *The Blessed Damozel* (379) is a poem of love in the romantic sense and not a poem of faith. The lover communes in imagination with his ten years' dead mistress, as she "leans out from the gold bar of Heaven." The description of infinite space as viewed from Eternity (verses 5 and 6) is very fascinating. Indeed the whole poem combines wonderfully two moods not easily combined, the passionate and the fantastic.

380-385.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI was a less original but a more finished writer than her brother. All these little poems but the last are poems of death. Each has great charm, and perhaps 381 is the best. The

¹ I recollect, however, a very charming poem on the subject by Dean Beeching in *Poems of To-day*. Cf. Appendix II.

second of the two sonnets (382) is one of the most lovely written since the days of Wordsworth and Keats. It owes much of its charm to the haunting and dreamlike repetitions of the opening word. The same effect is produced, not by choice but of necessity, in the Rondeau, a metrical pattern hailing from Renaissance France as the Sonnet from Italy, and used with beautiful effect in several poems of Henley. I quote one which deals with the same situation as this rondeau-like sonnet of Christina Rossetti :

“When you are old, and I am passed away—
 Passed, and your face, your golden face, is grey—
 I think, whate’er the end, this dream of mine,
 Comforting you, a friendly star will shine
 Down the dim slope where still you stumble and
 stray.

So may it be : that so dead Yesterday,
 No sad-eyed ghost but generous and gay,
 May serve you memories like almighty wine,
 When you are old !

Dear Heart, it shall be so. Under the sway
 Of death, the past’s enormous disarray
 Lies hushed and dark. Yet though there come
 no sign,
 Live on well pleased : immortal and divine
 Love shall still tend you, as God’s angel may,
 When you are old.”

387-390.

MORRIS. These strangely picturesque and violent ballads present another aspect of that mediævalist movement already noticed in Rossetti. *Shameful Death* (388) is the most direct and the most impressive of them, so far as one can judge who does not much care about the style at all.

392-395.

SWINBURNE is the most triumphantly rhythmical of poets; indeed, when we seek to pry beneath the rhythms for the "message" of the poet, we often find but little there. At his worst, he is "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

ITYLUS (392) is the protest of the melancholy brooding nightingale addressed to the joyous roving swallow who seems forgetful of the tragedy in which, according to Greek myth, both their lives originated.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE (393) is a much finer poem, indeed it is a magnificent statement of the religion, more Buddhist than pagan, that yearns for extinction as the climax of life. The best verses are the simplest, such as the second, and the last four, especially the last but one. Indeed the last few verses, with their quiet inexorable rhythm, and their sombre yet passionate restraint, ring out like some great anti-Christian hymn.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN (394) is a fine example of detailed and sumptuous description, and might be compared, for all its obvious differences, with the Spenserian stanzas in Tennyson's *Lotos-eaters*. Lines 27 and 28 must be based, I think, on the idea borrowed from the Persian and expressed, obscurely enough, in the sixth stanza of FitzGerald's *Omar Khayyám* (319). I am not aware of any legend in more familiar mythologies connecting the nightingale and the rose.

OLIVE (395) is an entirely delightful act of homage to a child of nine. The last two verses echo the philosophy of Wordsworth, as expressed in the *Immortality Ode* (287). I confess a doubt as to the identity of the poet alluded to in verse five. The last verses would suggest Wordsworth, but Swinburne was far more in sympathy with Shelley than with Wordsworth.

396.

O'SHAUGHNESSY'S "ODE" is a vigorous statement, rather in the Swinburnian manner, of the claims of poets to the world's gratitude. They are the prophets who flash forth the ideas of to-morrow, which the men of prose, "the soldier, the king and the peasant," coming after, embody in workable institutions. I cannot regard the curious alternations of the rhyme system of the first four stanzas as anything but slovenly and weak.

397.

HENLEY was one of the latest of Victorian poets. But our collection can hardly be called complete with Meredith, Francis Thompson, Kipling, and Yeats unrepresented. This is a fine poem enough, a vehement, almost truculent, avowal of self-sufficiency, an expression of the un-Christian attitude neatly summed up in the misquotation: "Before Jehovah was, I AM." If we may judge from the end of Book Fourth, Palgrave, had he cared to make a Victorian "book" for himself, would have ended on a quieter and serener note, and Henley's delightful volumes would have furnished many pieces to suit such a purpose. Though not one of the great, Henley is one of the most companionable of poets.

APPENDIX I

THE IDEAL ANTHOLOGY

THE ideal anthology has not yet been published. All existing anthologies, and *The Golden Treasury* among them, err in two opposite directions at once. From one point of view they are too long; from another equally reasonable point of view they are too short. In the opening words of his preface Palgrave wrote, "This little collection differs, it is believed, from others in the attempt made to include in it all the best original Lyrical pieces and Songs in our language, by writers not living,—and none beside the best." Let us assume that Palgrave has succeeded in the first part of his ambition: he has come as near success as could be reasonably expected. But, as to the second part of his ambition, "to include none beside the best," he has obviously failed. Side by side with the authentic masterpieces is a body of work, of about the same length, consisting of second-rate poems, often interesting, often charming, still emphatically not *masterpieces*, if we are to use words with any care for their meaning. There are also, of course, a few third-rate poems, but their presence we may take as accidental and ignore. To return to the "good second-rate," the "just below the masterpiece" class—if the reader happens to enjoy any particular poem of this class, he will be glad to find it included in his anthology, and we need not grudge him his

satisfaction. But, if he should happen not to care about it (and since it is not a "masterpiece" we are not prepared to complain of his indifference), he has every right to ask "Why is — in this book, which purports to be a collection of 'the best' ? I should much prefer to see — and — included."

In fact, good poetry (and perhaps good art of all kinds) is of two orders, the authentic and typical masterpieces, without which no anthology can be complete, and that other class, quite infinitely larger, the class of "the good." Now if an anthology should consist only of the masterpieces, *The Golden Treasury* is too large. But if it is to go beyond that, if "the good" fall within its scope, why should not *all* the good be included? From this point of view *The Golden Treasury* is far too small.

There is only one solution. Every one must make his own anthology. Such an anthology would contain, as a matter of course, all the masterpieces. This would be the compulsory part. The rest would be voluntary: each private anthologist can add as many "good" poems as he pleases. Let him beware, by the way, that he add none of the bad as well.

Modern business methods, hailing, I suppose, from America or Germany, have familiarised us all with the loose-leaf notebook, the loose-leaf ledger, the loose-leaf diary, and what not. Where is the enterprising firm that will apply the same principle to art and give us the loose-leaf anthology? The imaginary purchaser of this imaginary work would be supplied with a loose cover, containing, as a fixture, our collection of masterpieces and no more. But besides this, all the "good" poems would be published on loose sheets, and our man could buy as many or as few of them as he liked. Thus when we went to

see our friends, how attractive it would be to go to their book shelves, and pull out a volume, exclaiming: "Let's see what you've got in *your Golden Treasury!*"

The reader will be wondering who is to draw up the list of masterpieces. Well, here is a list, fearlessly offered for the reader's destructive criticism. I would premise that its aim is above all things to be typical, and also to be brief. Where there are several poems, all of the highest excellence, yet all essentially similar, I have taken only one. I have confined myself as far as possible to *The Golden Treasury*, and have not attempted to select from the works of modern poets. That is the only reason for the absence of Meredith's *Love in the Valley*, for example, or Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*.

BOOK I

21. XXVIII. "Forget not yet."—*Wyat*.
 XL. "Come, Sleep: O Sleep!"—*Sidney*.
 LVIII. "With how sad steps, O Moon."—*Sidney*.
18. XXIII. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"—*Shakespeare*.
28. XXXVIII. "That time of year thou may'st in me behold."—*Shakespeare*.
36. XLVIII. "Take, O take those lips away."—*Shakespeare*.
42. LVI. "Blow, blow, thou winter wind."—*Shakespeare*.
45. LXIV. "Fear no more the heat o' the sun."—*Shakespeare*.
46. LXV. "Full fathom five."—*Shakespeare*.
 XXX. "I saw my lady weep."—*Anon*.
37. XLIX. "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part."—*Drayton*.

BOOK II

62. LXXXV. Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity.—*Milton*.
66. XCIX. Lycidas.—*Milton*.
112. CXLIV. L'Allegro.—*Milton*.
113. CXLV. Il Penseroso.—*Milton*.
115. CXLVII. Blest Pair of Sirens.—*Milton*.
64. LXXXVII. On the late Massacre in Piedmont—*Milton*.
71. XCIV. On his Blindness.—*Milton*.
69. XCII. "The glories of our blood and state."—*Shirley*.
74. XCVII. "When God at first made Man."—*Herbert*.
82. CVIII. "Gather ye rose-buds while ye may."—*Herrick*.
- CXVIII. Corinna's Maying.—*Herrick*.
93. CXX. "Whenas in silks my Julia goes."—*Herrick*.
90. CXVI. "Drink to me only with thine eyes."—*Jonson*.
98. CXXVI. "Not, Celia, that I juster am."—*Sedley*.
99. CXXVII. To Althea from Prison.—*Lovelace*.
- CL. "I saw Eternity the other night."—*Vaughan*.
- On the Picture of Saint Theresa.—*Crashaw*.

BOOK III

124. CLX. "How sleep the Brave who sink to rest."—*Collins*.
146. CLXXXVI. Ode to Evening.—*Collins*.
147. CLXXXVII. Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.—*Gray*.

129. CLXV. The Loss of the *Royal George*.—*Cowper*.
 139. CLXXVI. "Ye flowery banks o' bonnie
 Doon."—*Burns*.
 144. CLXXXIV. To a Mouse.—*Burns*.
 156. CLXCVII. John Anderson.—*Burns*.
 CLXXIV. "Never seek to tell thy love."—
Blake.
 A War song to Englishmen.—*Blake*.
 The Tiger.—*Blake*.
 "And did those feet in ancient time."—
Blake.

BOOK IV

174. CCXVII. "She was a phantom of delight."—
Wordsworth.
 177-180. CCXX-CCXXIII. Lucy.—*Wordsworth*.
 208. CCLII. Ode to Duty.—*Wordsworth*.
 243. CCLXXXIX. The Cuckoo.—*Wordsworth*.
 250. CCXCVIII. The Reaper.—*Wordsworth*.
 276. CCCXXIII. Nature and the Poet.—*Wordsworth*.
 287. CCCXXXVIII. Ode on Intimations of Im-
 mortality.—*Wordsworth*.
 213. CCLVII. "Milton! thou shouldst be living at
 this hour."—*Wordsworth*.
 245. CCXCI. Upon Westminster Bridge.—*Words-*
worth.
 261. CCCIX. By the Sea.—*Wordsworth*.
 278. CCCXXVI. "The World is too much with us."
 —*Wordsworth*.
 CCCXVI. Kubla Khan.—*Coleridge*.
 233. CCLXXVI. Hester.—*Lamb*.
 206. CCL. Ye Mariners of England.—*Campbell*.
 218. CCLXII. The Burial of Sir John Moore.—
Wolfe.
 172. CCXV. Lines to an Indian Air.—*Shelley*.

- 188 CCXXXII. To the Night.—*Shelley*.
 227. CCLXX. Stanzas written in Dejection near
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 241. CCLXXXVII. To a Skylark.—*Shelley*.
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 260. CCCVIII. The Recollection.—*Shelley*.
 275. CCCXXII. To the West Wind.—*Shelley*.
 The Cloud.—*Shelley*.
 271. “Life of Life!”—*Shelley*.
 166. CCX. On first looking into Chapman’s Homer.
 —*Keats*.
 199. CCXLIII. “When I have fears that I may
 cease to be.”—*Keats*.
 193. CCXXXVII. La Belle Dame sans Merci.—*Keats*.
 244. CCXC. Ode to a Nightingale.—*Keats*.
 CCCXXVIII. Ode to a Grecian Urn.—*Keats*.

BOOK V

289. “I strove with none, for none was worth my
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 314. A Musical Instrument.—*E. B. Browning*.
 319. Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.—*FitzGerald*.
 328. “Thesplendour falls on castle walls.”—*Tennyson*.
 329. “Tears, idle tears.”—*Tennyson*.
 334. “Come into the garden, Maud.”—*Tennyson*.
 “Oh! that ’twere possible.”—*Tennyson*.
 341. Home Thoughts, from Abroad.—*Browning*.
 342. Home Thoughts, from the Sea.—*Browning*.
 344. A Woman’s Last Word.—*Browning*.
 346. A Grammarian’s Funeral.—*Browning*.
 349. Prospice.—*Browning*.
 One Word More.—*Browning*.
 353. “Say not the struggle naught availeth.”—
Clough.
 360. “O Captain! My Captain!”—*Whitman*.

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367. Morality.—*Arnold*.
The Buried Life.—*Arnold*.
376. The Married Lover.—*C. Patmore*.
379. The Blessed Damozel.—*D. G. Rossetti*.
382. Remember.—*C. G. Rossetti*.
381. "When I am dead, my dearest."—*C. G. Rossetti*.
393. The Garden of Proserpine.—*Swinburne*.
397. "Out of the Night that covers me."—*Henley*.
"The late lark twitters in the quiet sky."—
Henley.
"What is to come."—*Henley*.

APPENDIX II

SOME BOOKS

I PROPOSE to set down here the names of a few books that may attract and interest the lover of lyric poetry. I have not the vaguest intention of compiling a complete bibliography. I should quail before so vast an undertaking, and the reader would probably quail before its result. Such books as I mention are those in which the ordinary reader might, I feel, most profitably pursue the subject further. Incidentally, they are also those to which this book owes most. The subject divides itself naturally enough into (1) poetry, (2) criticism.

I. POETRY

THE OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE, edited by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch (Clarendon Press), is the most generally accepted standard anthology published since *The Golden Treasury*. It is now some sixteen years old. It starts earlier than *The Golden Treasury*, as its first poem is dated 1250, and it continues later, since several living poets are included. It is about twice as long as *The Golden Treasury*, to which the editor pays a very handsome tribute in his preface.

THE ENGLISH POETS, edited by T. H. Ward (Macmillan & Co.), 4 vols., is an invaluable collection on a much larger scale. The selection from each poet is here introduced by a biographical note and a critical essay, these last mostly written by some of the very finest critics alive in 1880, when the book first appeared, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, and others. The collection ends with Tennyson.

POEMS OF TO-DAY, published by Sidgwick & Jackson, is a very fairly representative anthology of lyric poetry from Meredith onwards. It contains poems of Stevenson, Francis Thompson, most of the best living writers, and several "war poems."

Beyond these there are, it need hardly be said, volumes of "Complete Poetical Works" of all the greater poets. Some readers will ask no more, or rather no less. But to those who find "Complete Works," with their almost inevitable small print and double-column page, rather a burden, I would recommend the many excellent volumes of selections. I am thinking chiefly of the great lyric poets of the last hundred and twenty years. Some of these, notably Shelley and Wordsworth, poured out masses of inferior work in which their great poetry is embedded and, so far as the inexpert reader is concerned, lost. Such readers may prefer :

WORDSWORTH. Selected poems, with introduction by Matthew Arnold (Golden Treasury Series).

SHELLEY. Selected poems, arranged by Stopford Brooke (Golden Treasury Series).

KEATS. Selected poems, with critical essay by Robert Bridges (Hodder).

BROWNING. Selections, published by Smith, Elder & Co.

BLAKE. Selections, with introductory essay by Sir W. Raleigh (Clarendon Press).

II. CRITICISM

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, by Andrew Lang (Longmans), is an invaluable book. Only a great literary man could make a book at once so complete, so brief, and so entertaining.

MILTON, by Sir W. Raleigh (Edward Arnold), is concerned mainly with *Paradise Lost*, but it gives

a wonderfully vivid account of Milton's personality as an artist and so throws light on all his work.

WORDSWORTH, by Sir W. Raleigh (Edward Arnold), is a quite indispensable book, and goes much deeper than the essays even of such distinguished critics of an earlier day as Matthew Arnold and Pater. Equally good is the essay on Wordsworth in Professor A. C. Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*.

SHELLEY, THE MAN AND THE POET, by A. Clutton Brock (Methuen), gives a profoundly interesting account of the life as well as of the art of Shelley; and Shelley's life is, unlike that of many poets, a deeply interesting one.

SHELLEY, an essay by Francis Thompson (Methuen, and Burns and Oates), is the most eloquent piece of literary criticism in the English language.

KEATS. I have already referred to Robert Bridges' essay above.

BROWNING, by G. K. Chesterton (Macmillan), in the English Men of Letters Series, is the most vivid and inspiring of the innumerable books on the subject.

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[In the "Additional Poems," pages 106-130, the works of each poet are grouped together under his name. The various poems, therefore, in this part of the book have not been separately indexed, only the various poets.]

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